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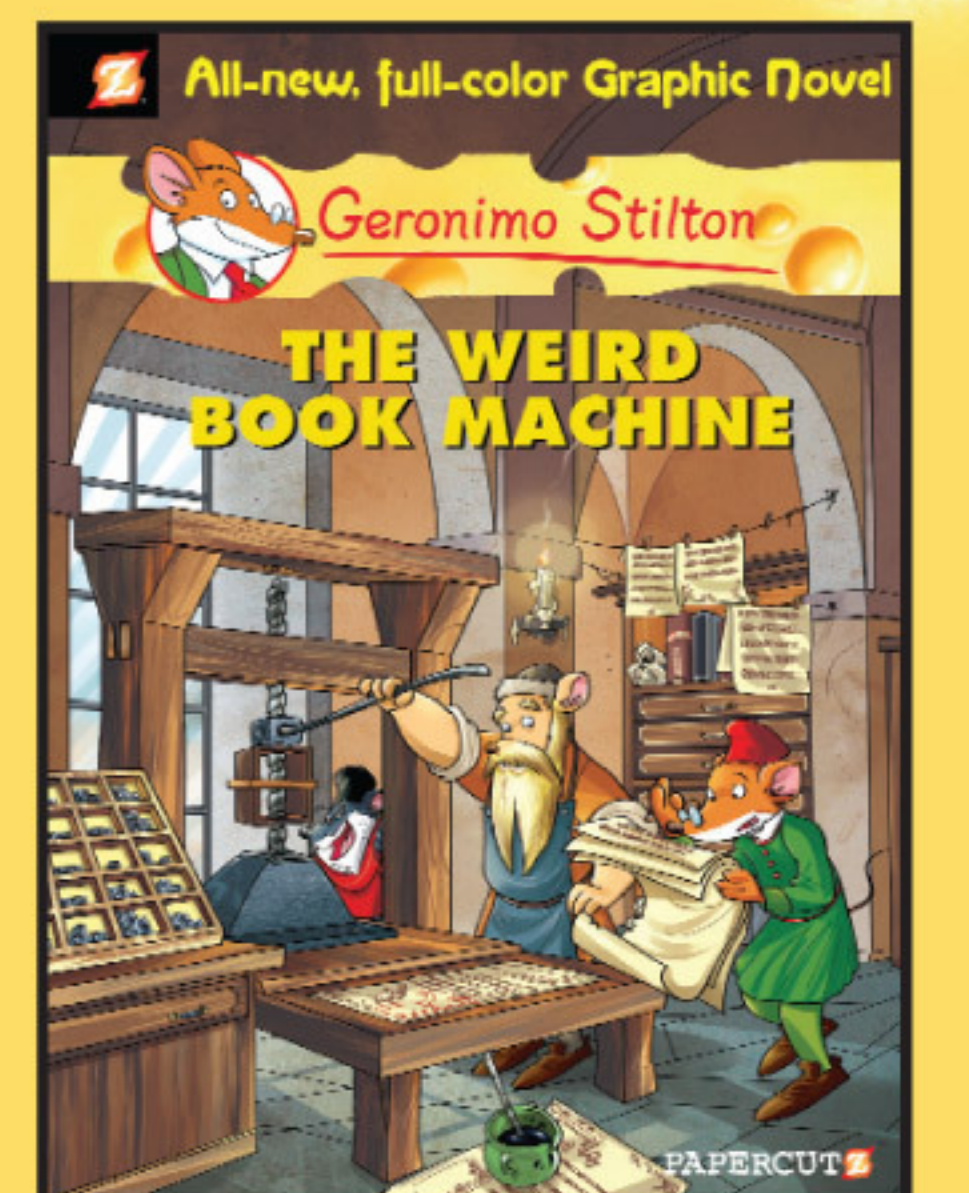
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Geronimo Stilton

WHO STOLE THE MONA LISA?

By Geronimo Stilton



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www.geronimostilton.com

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WHO STOLE THE MONA LISA?

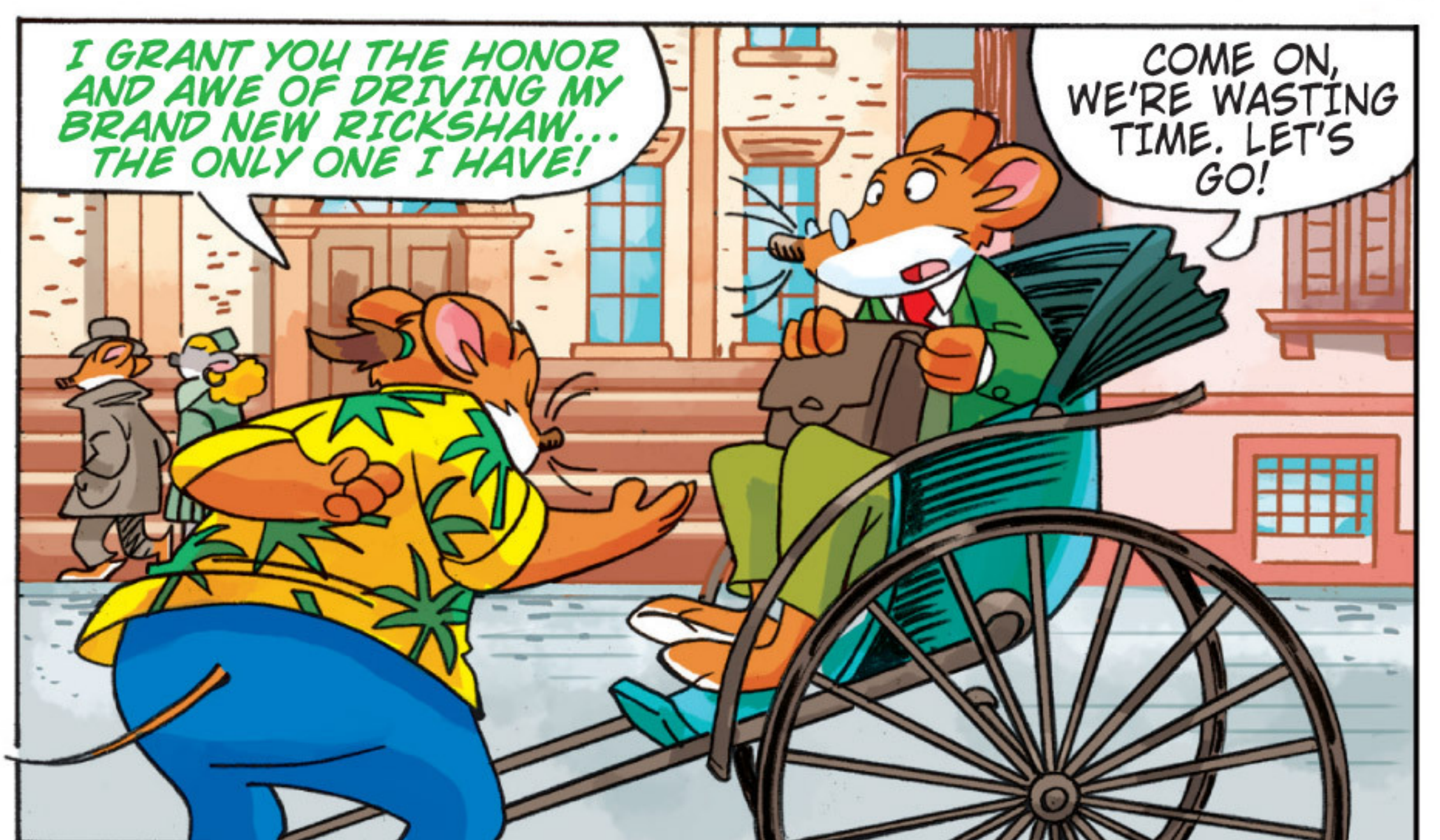
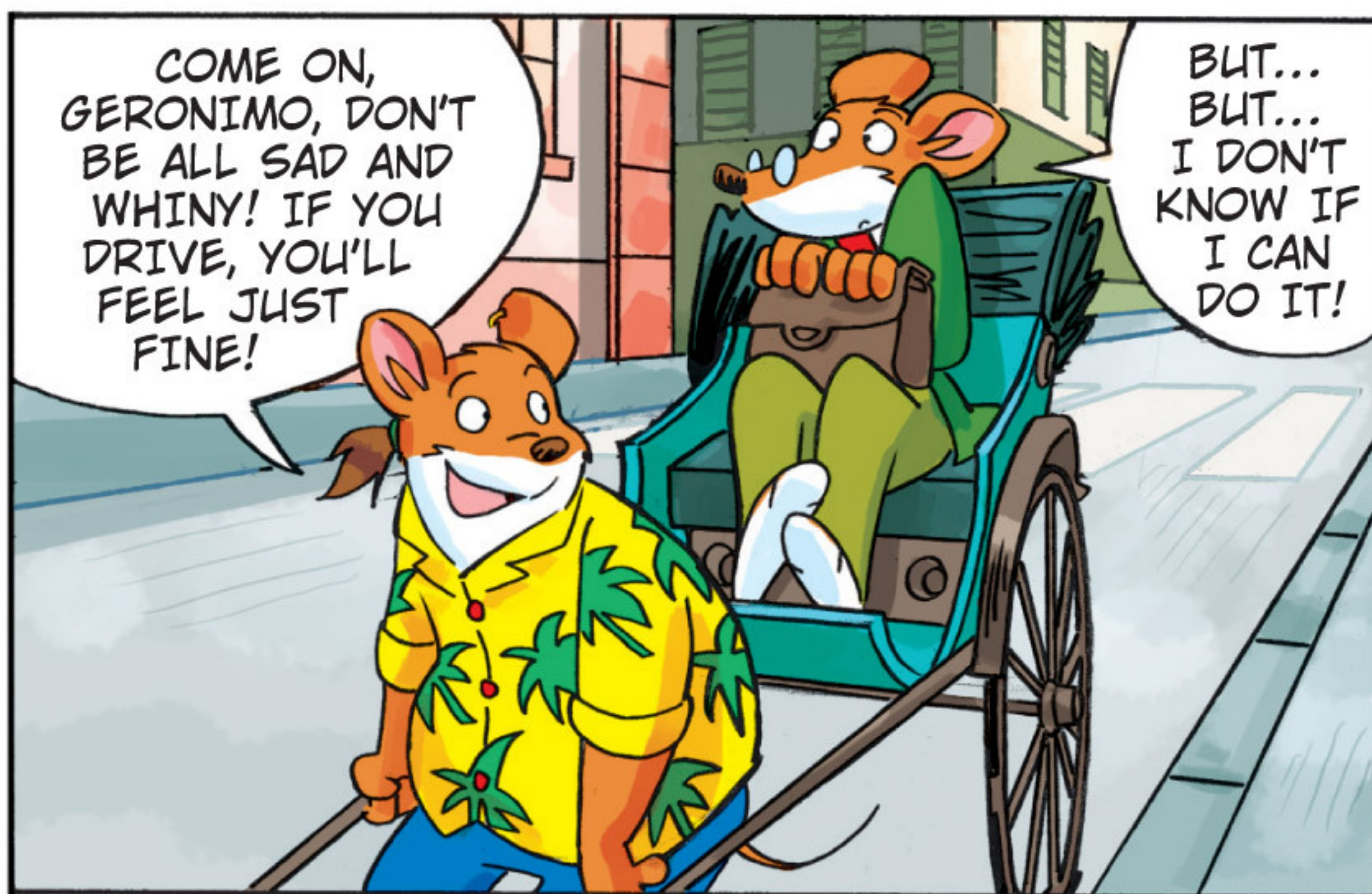
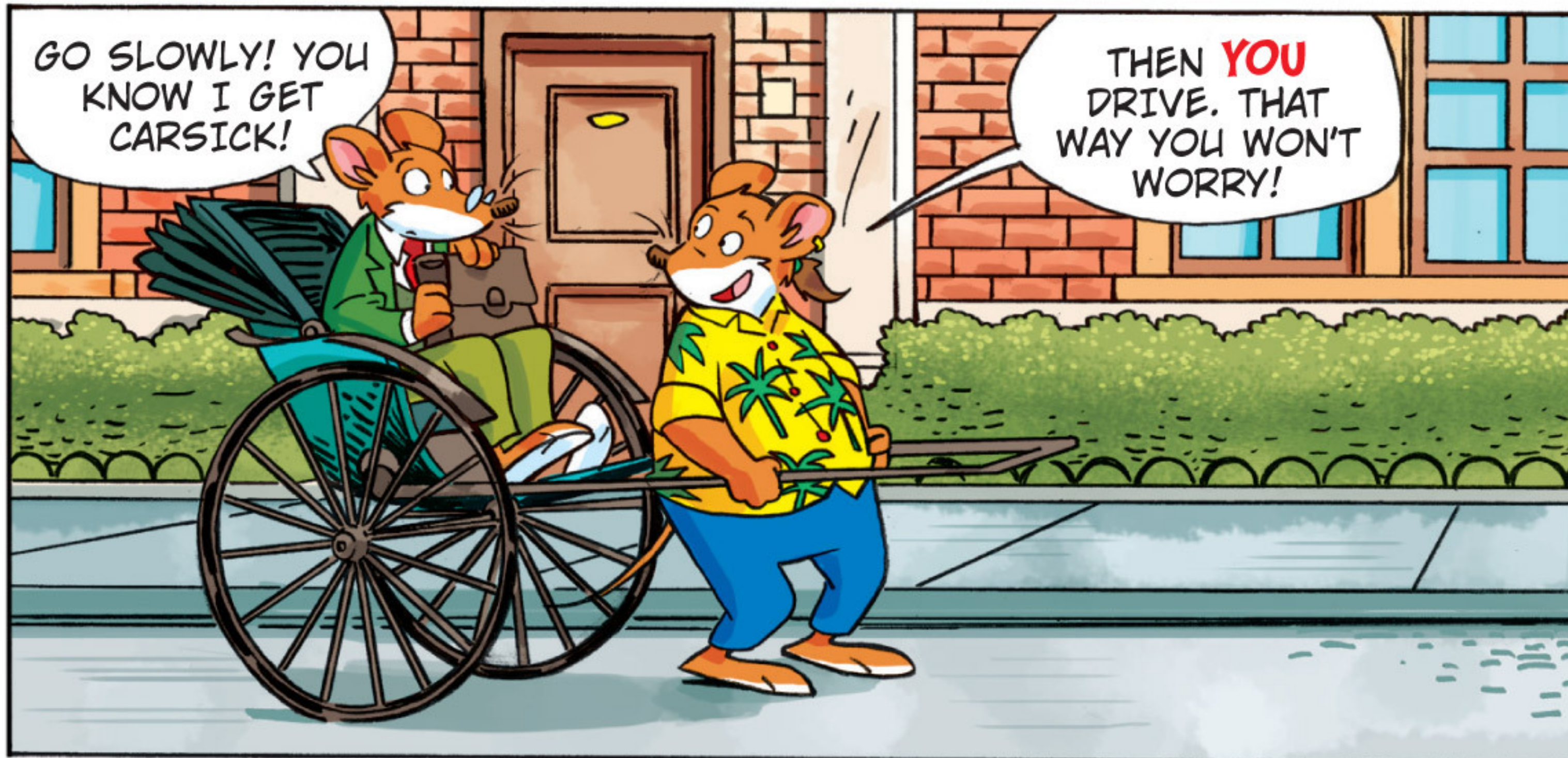
IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL **SUNNY** MORNING IN NEW MOUSE CITY AND I WAS LEAVING MY HOUSE TO GO TO THE OFFICE AS USUAL, WHEN...

...SUDDENLY I HEARD A FAMILIAR VOICE CALLING ME...

HEY THERE, COUSIN! HOW'S IT GOING?

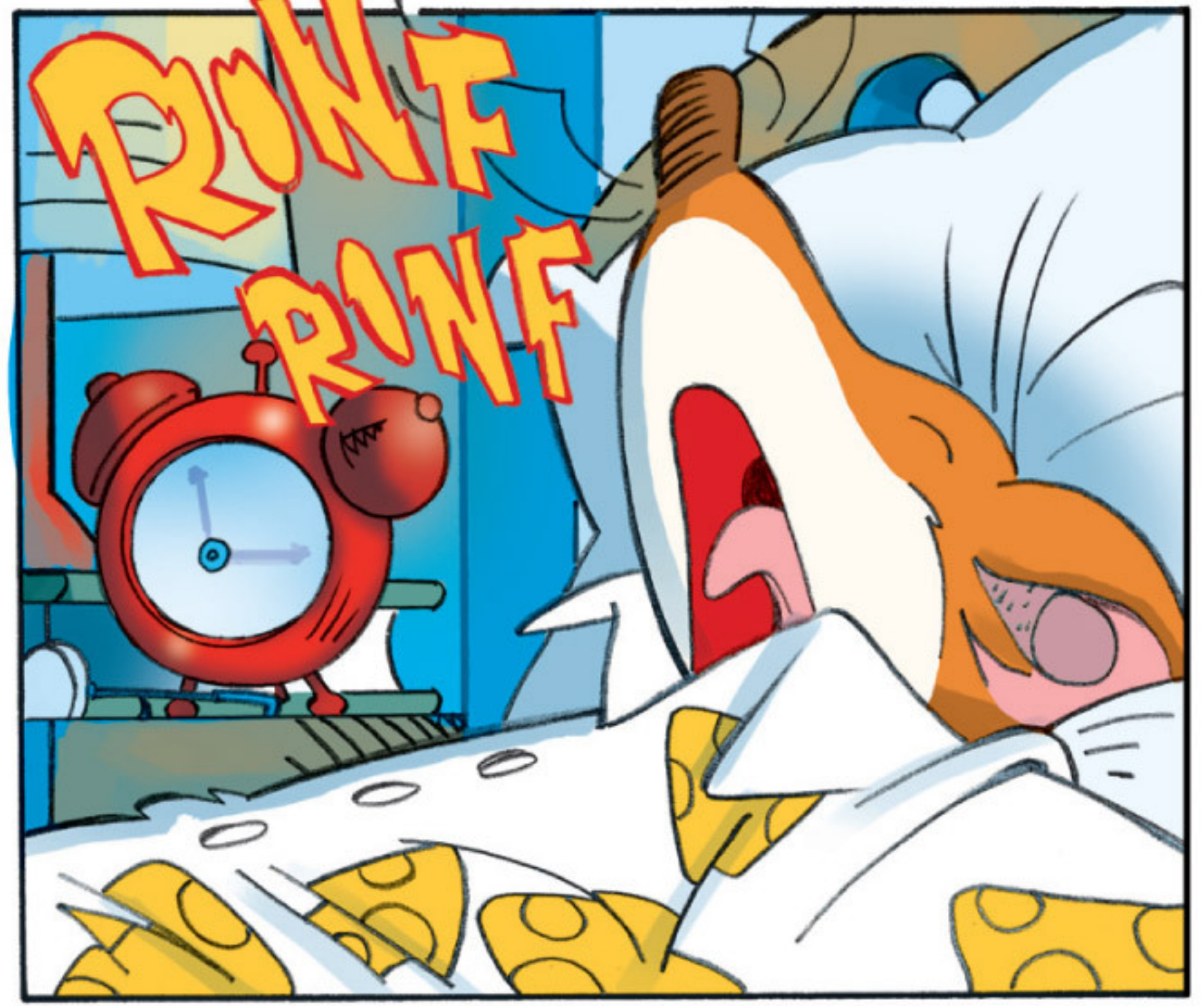
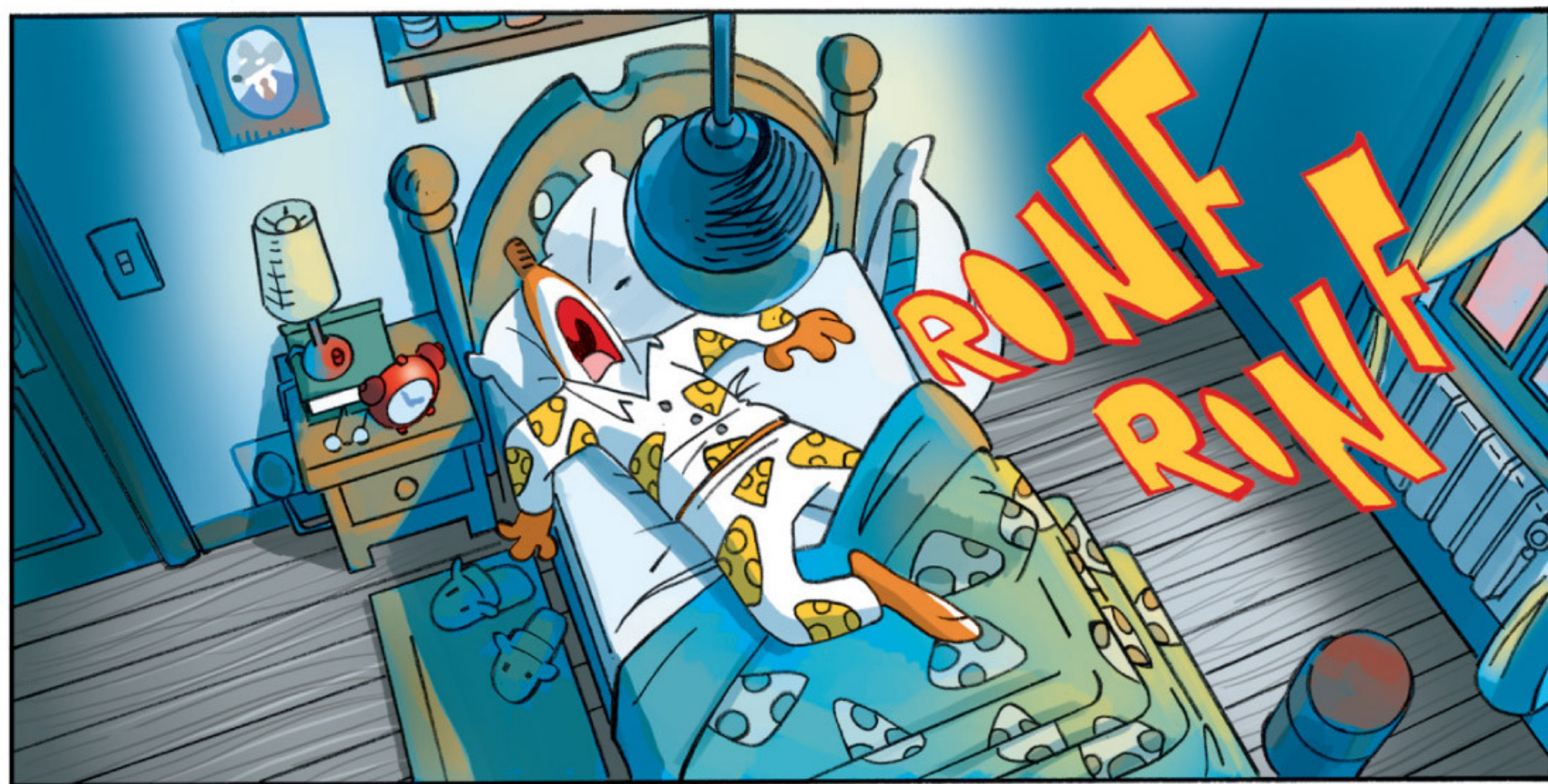
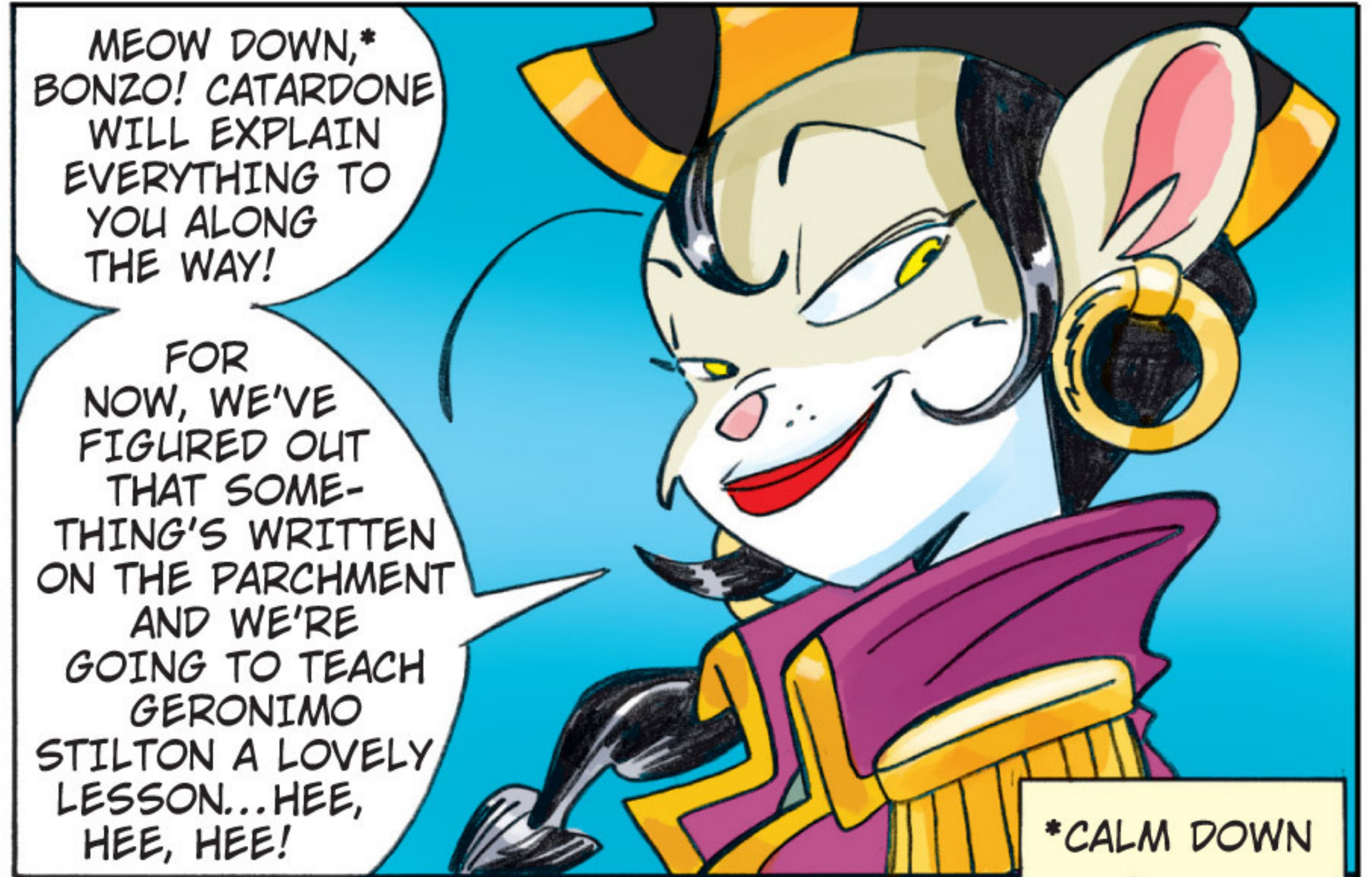
**YOO-HOO!
HERE I AM!
HELLO!**

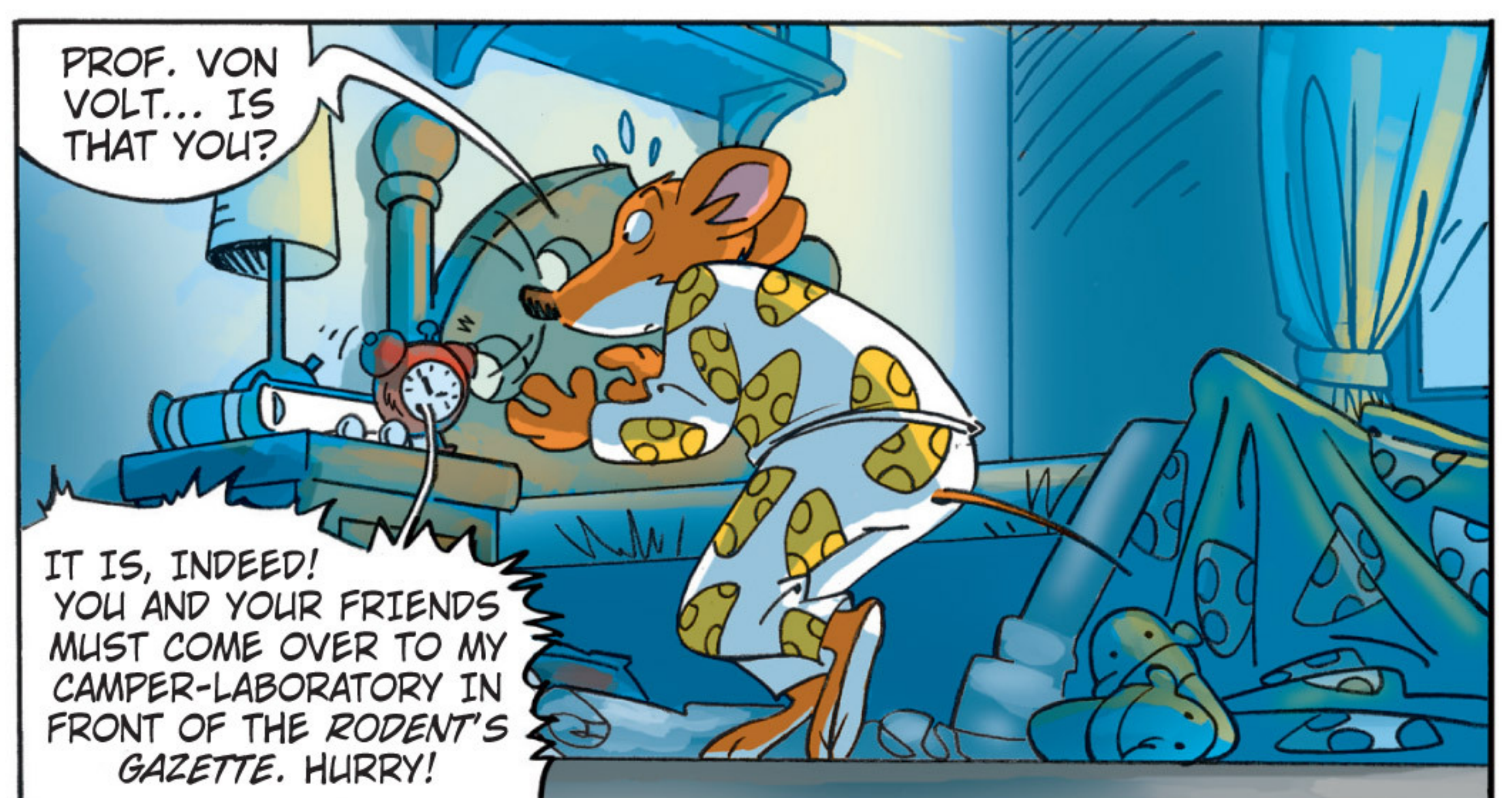
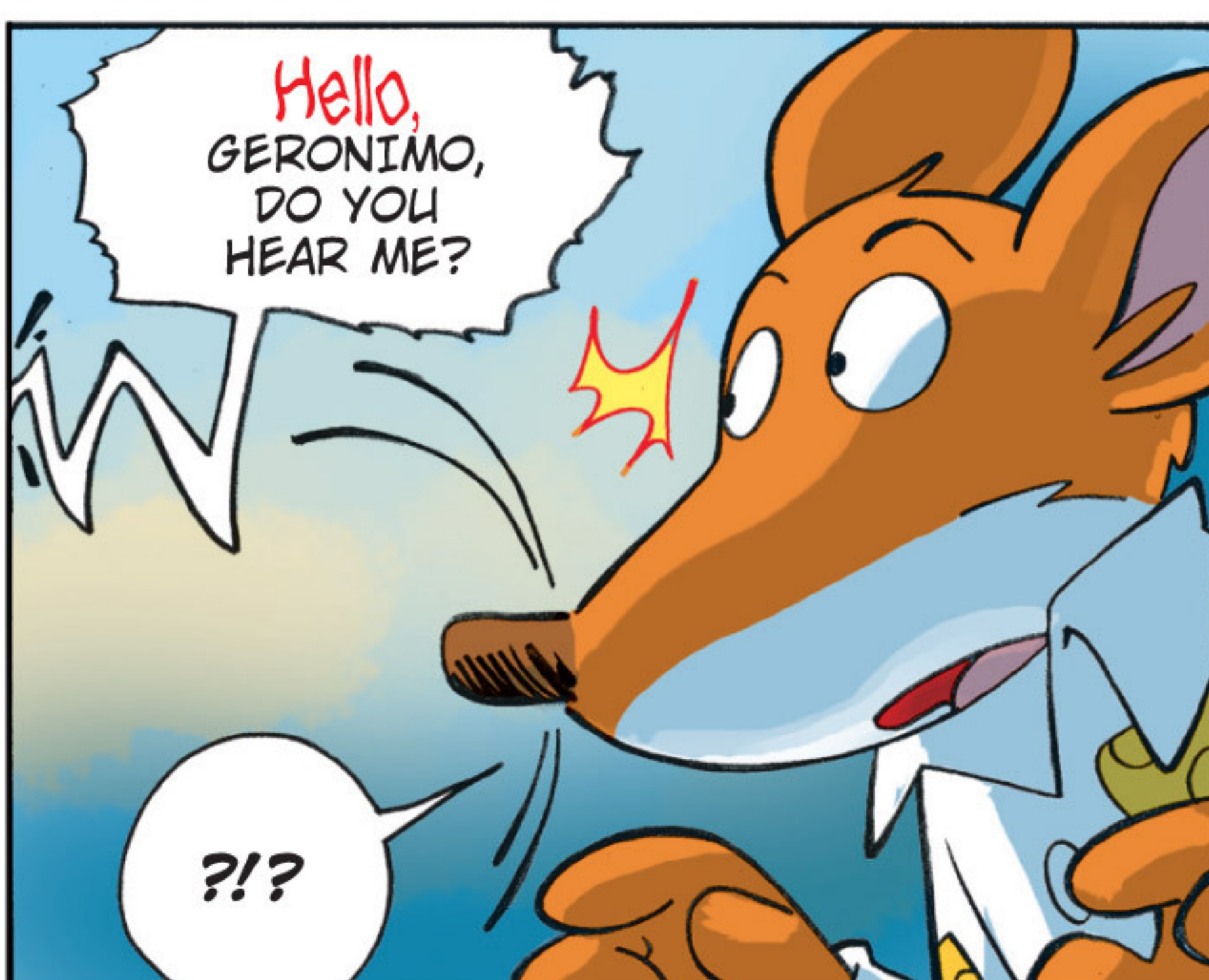
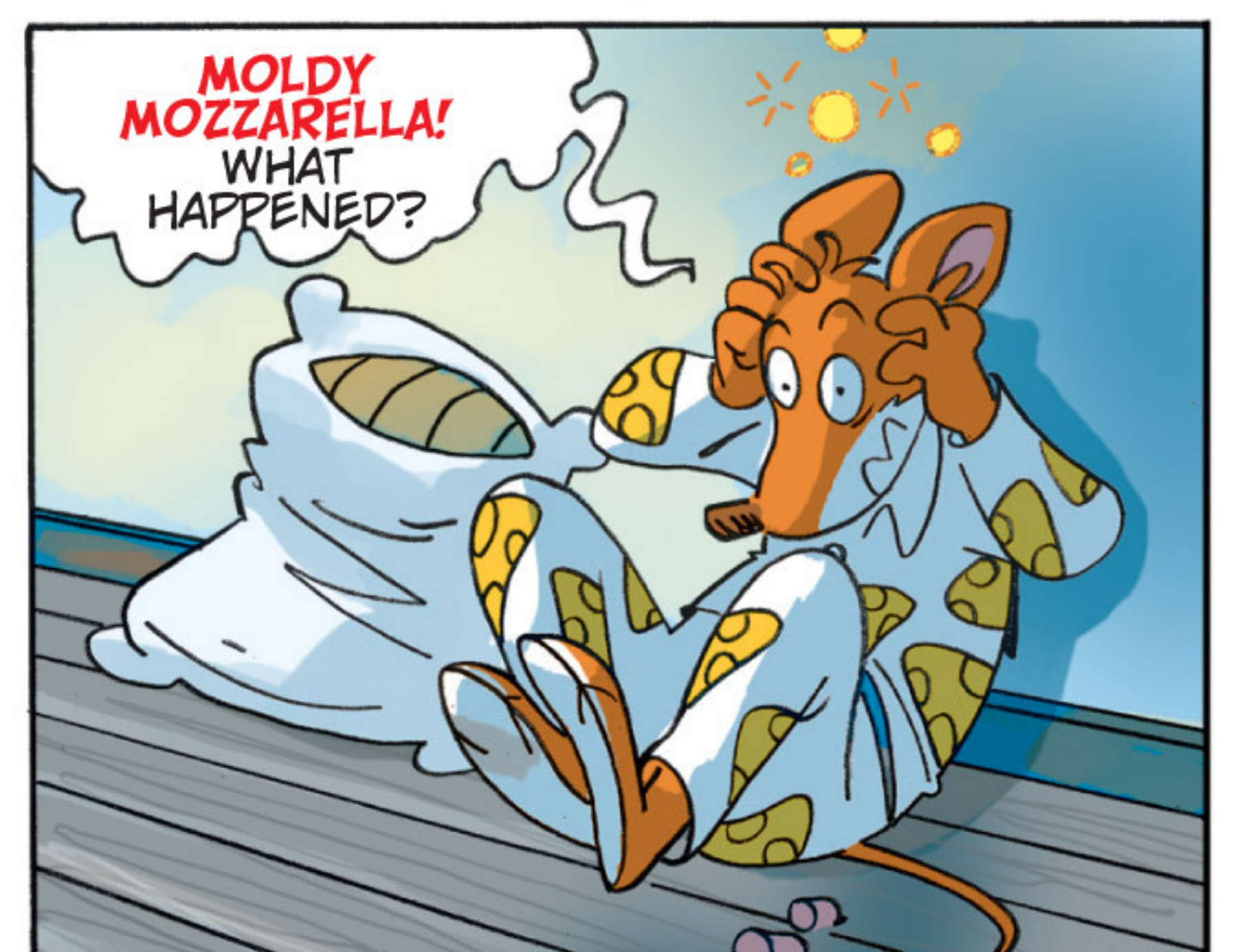
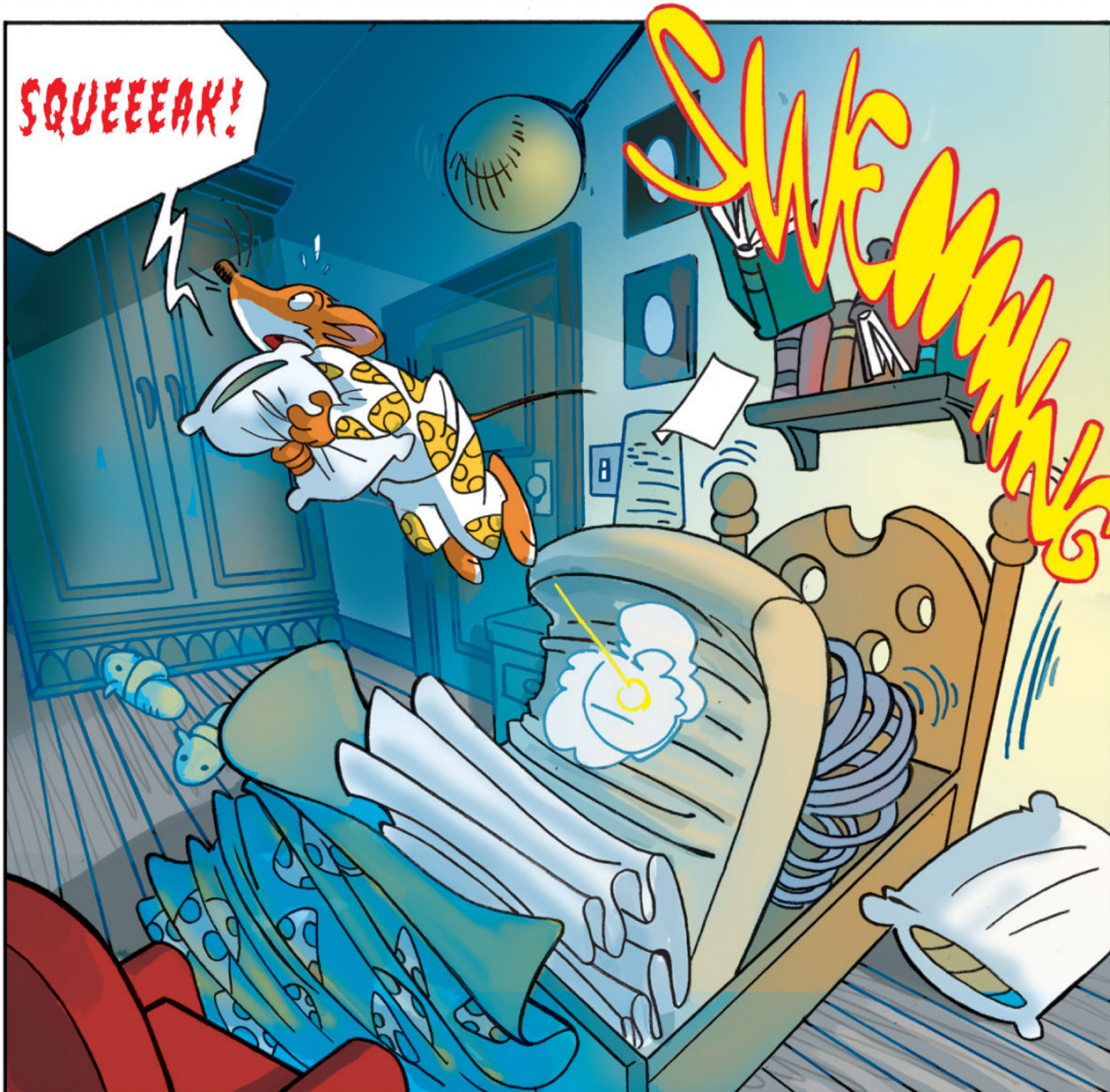
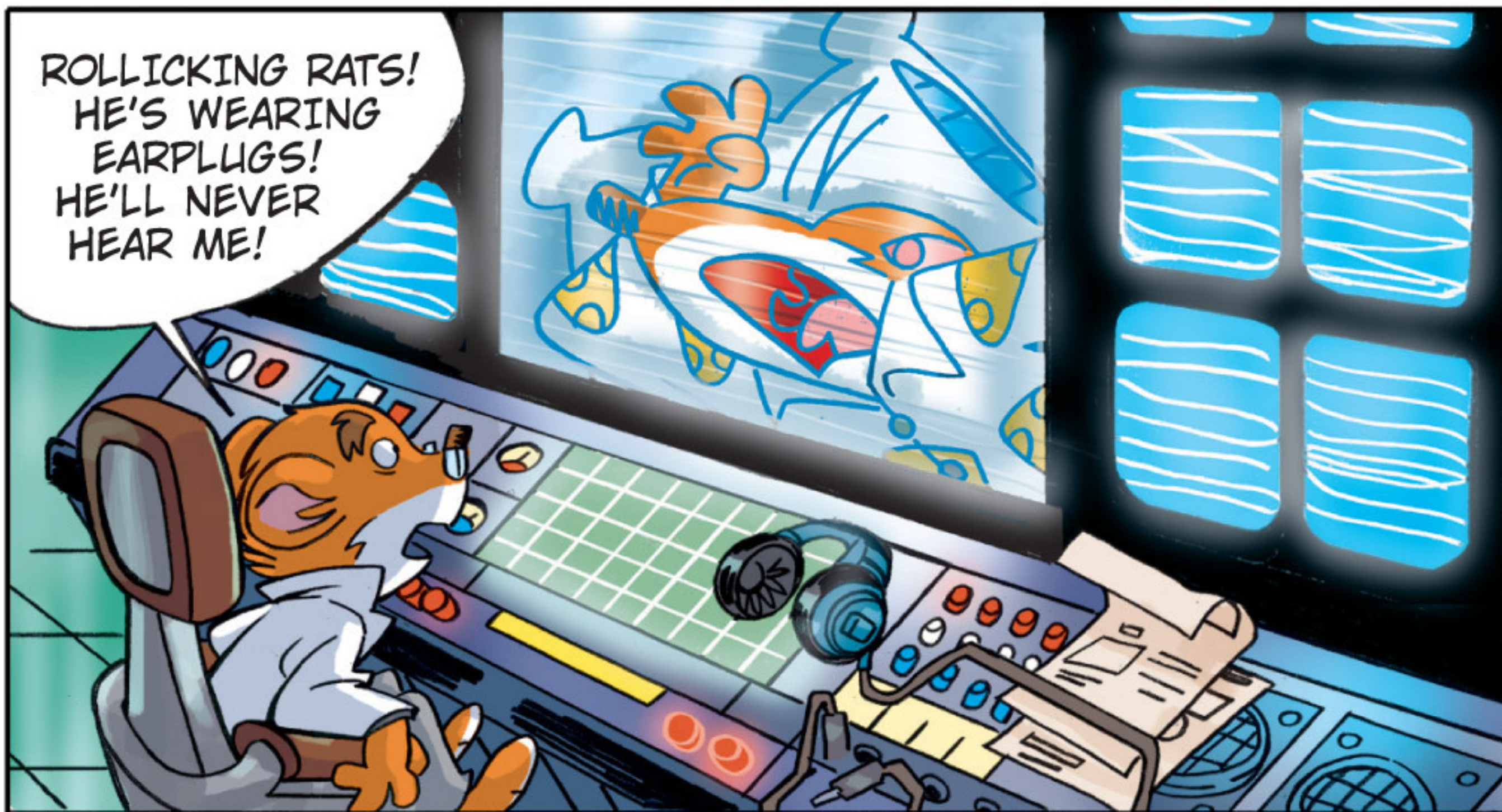
TRAP?
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?

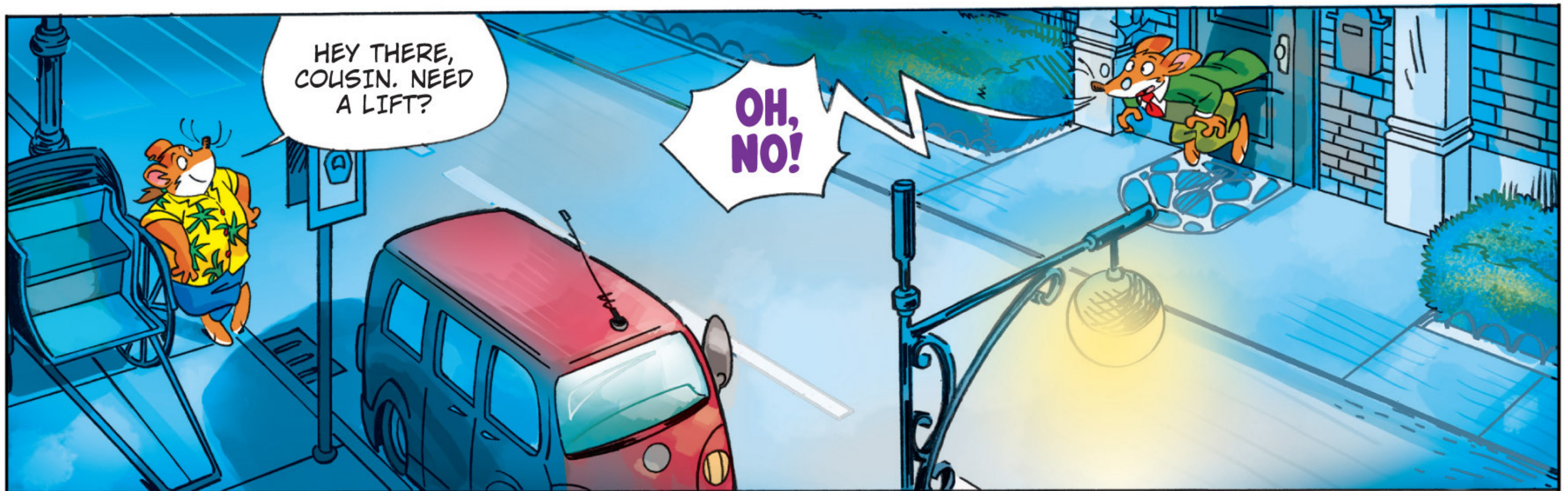
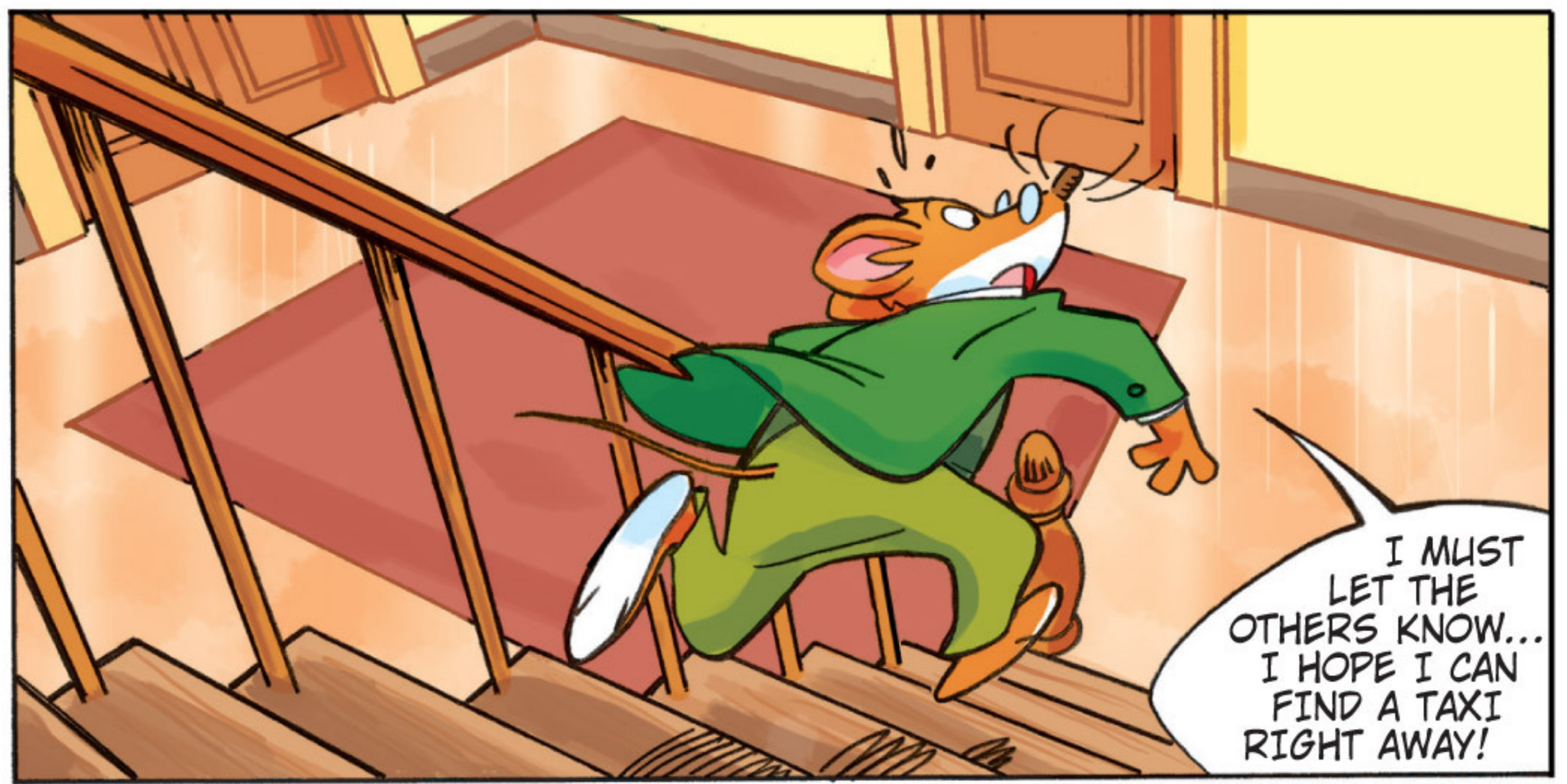
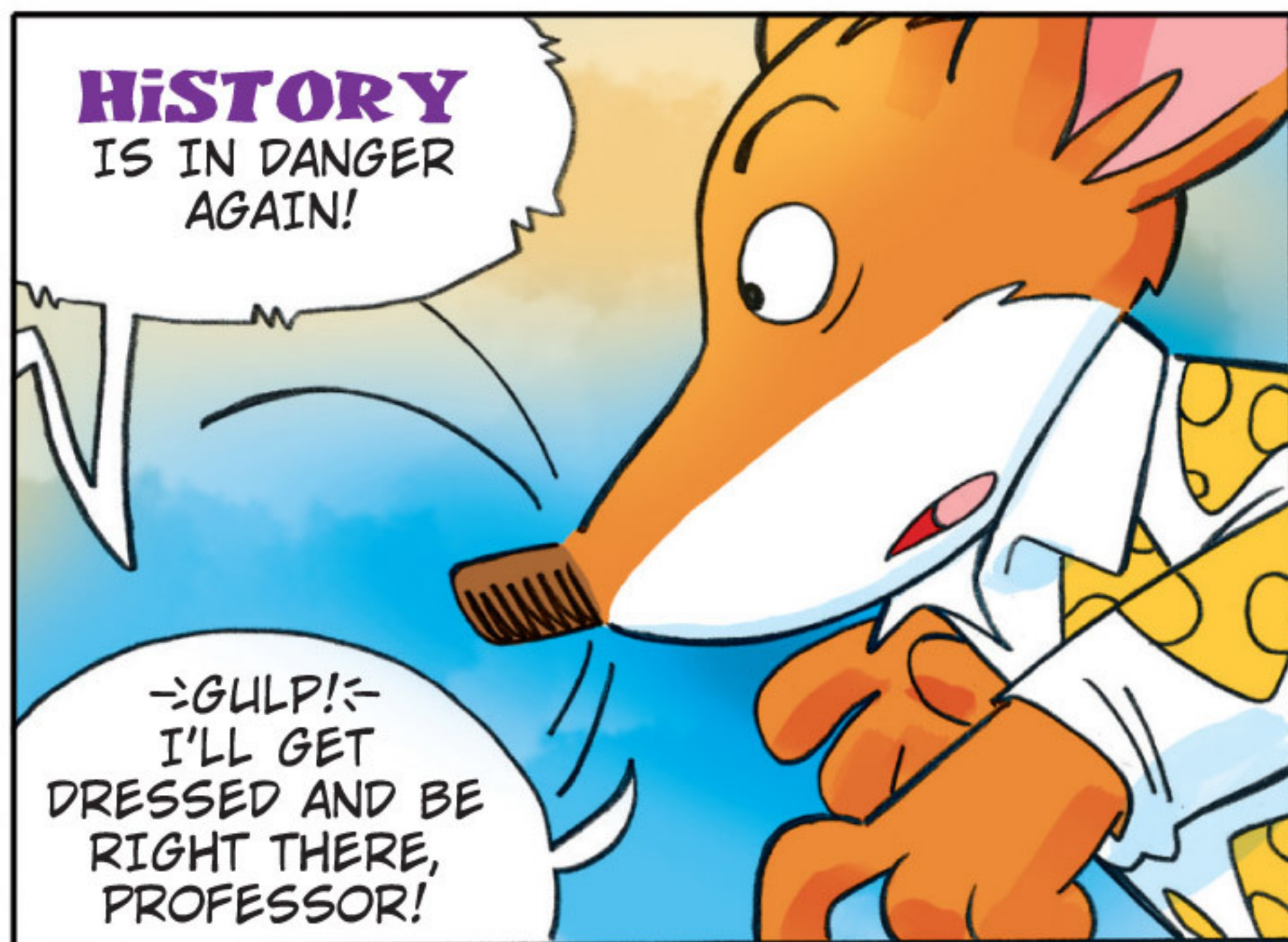


MEANWHILE
IN CATBURG,
THE CAPITAL
OF CAT
ISLAND...

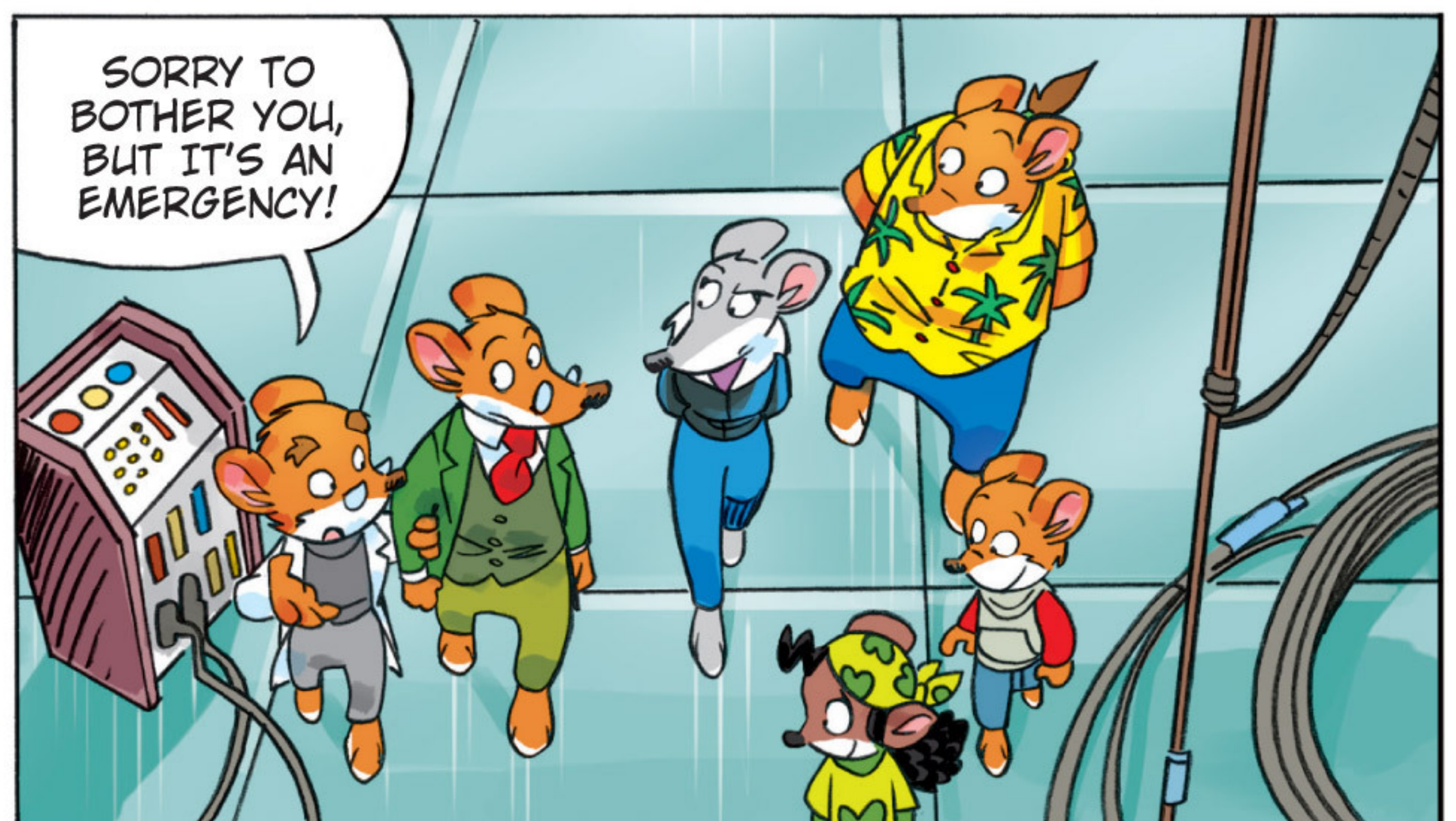
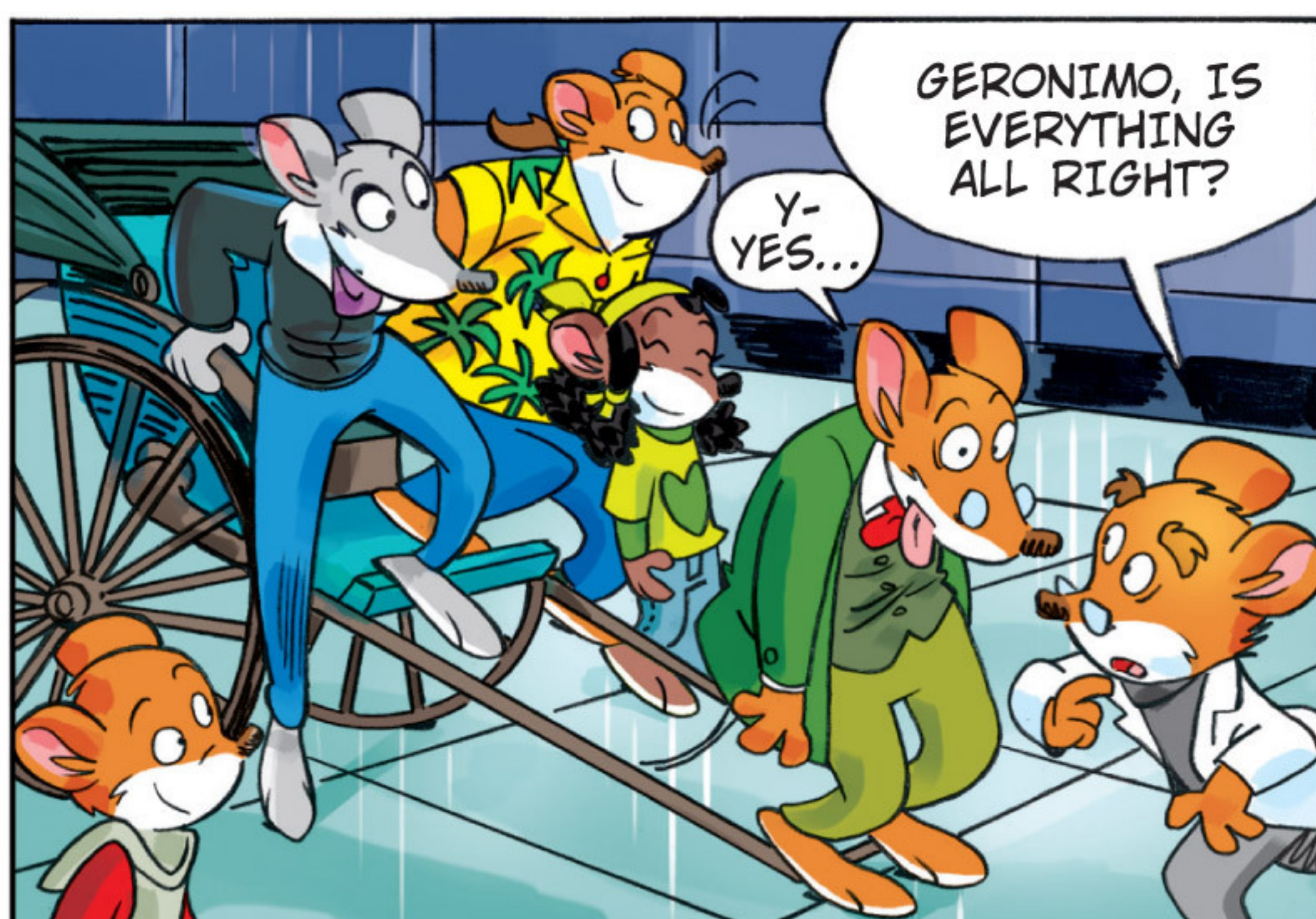
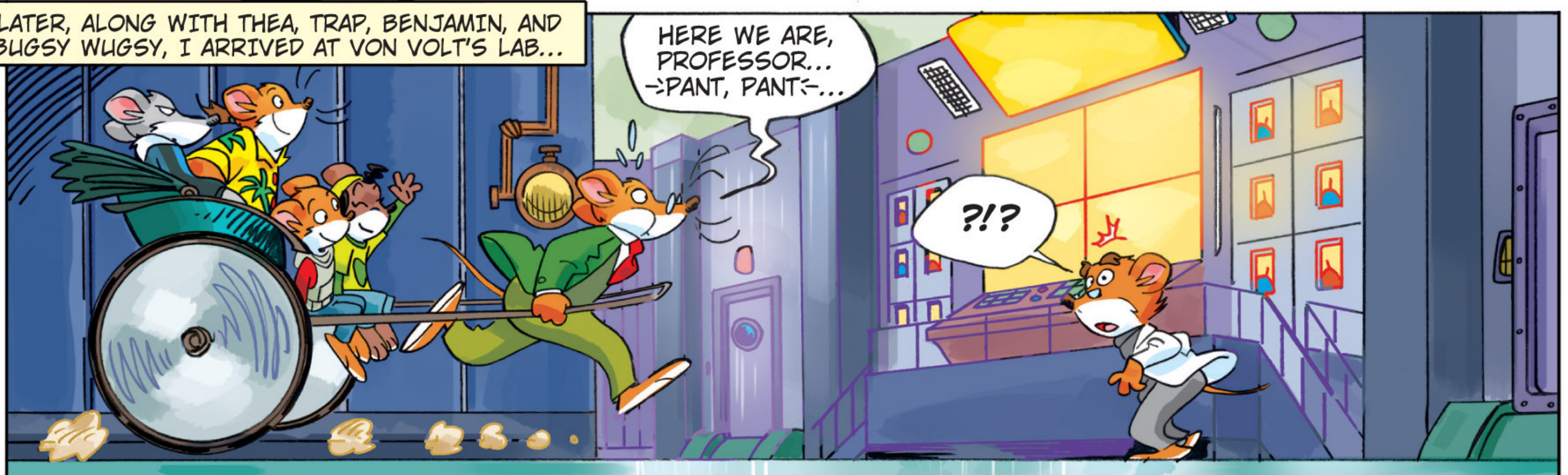


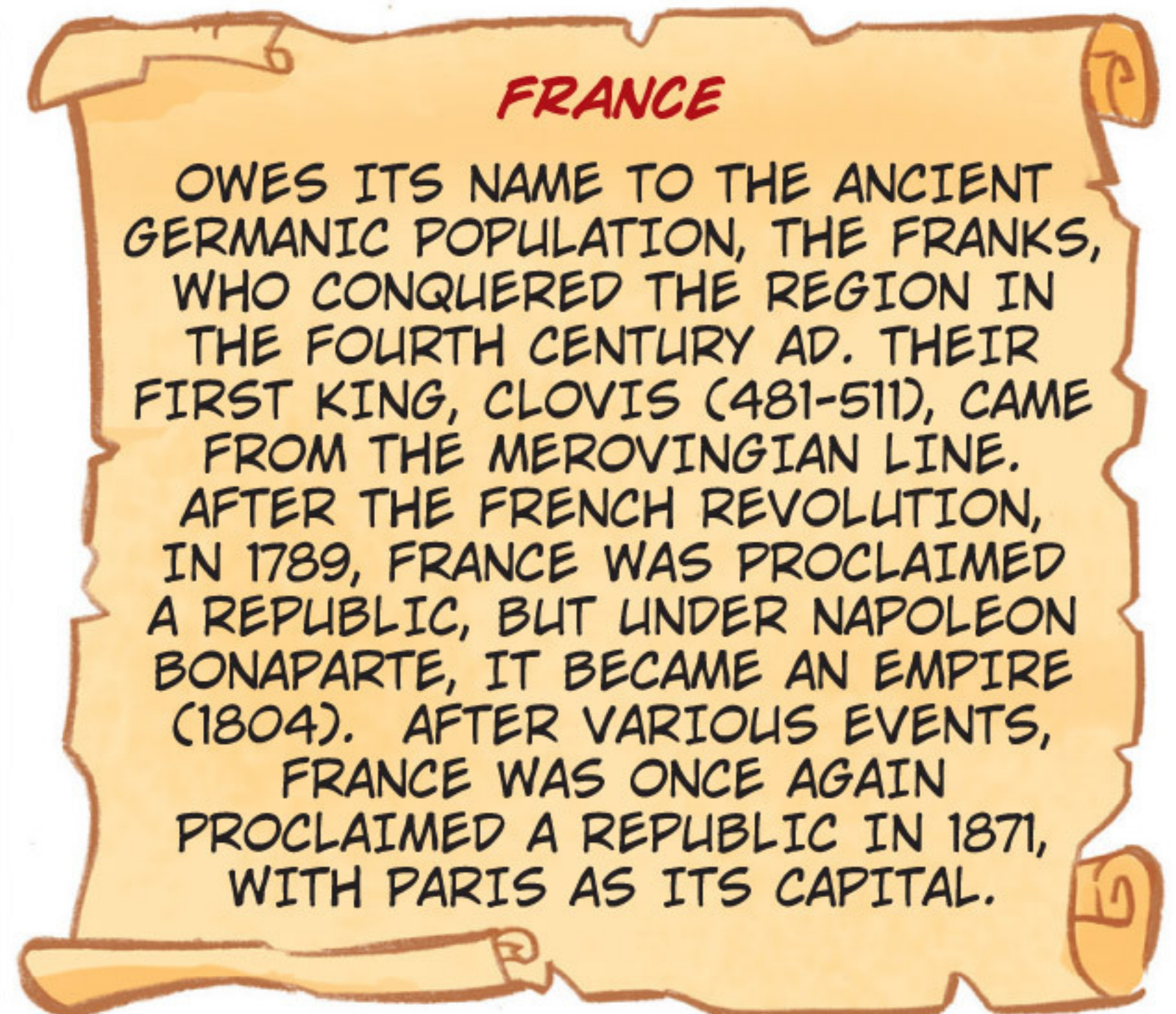
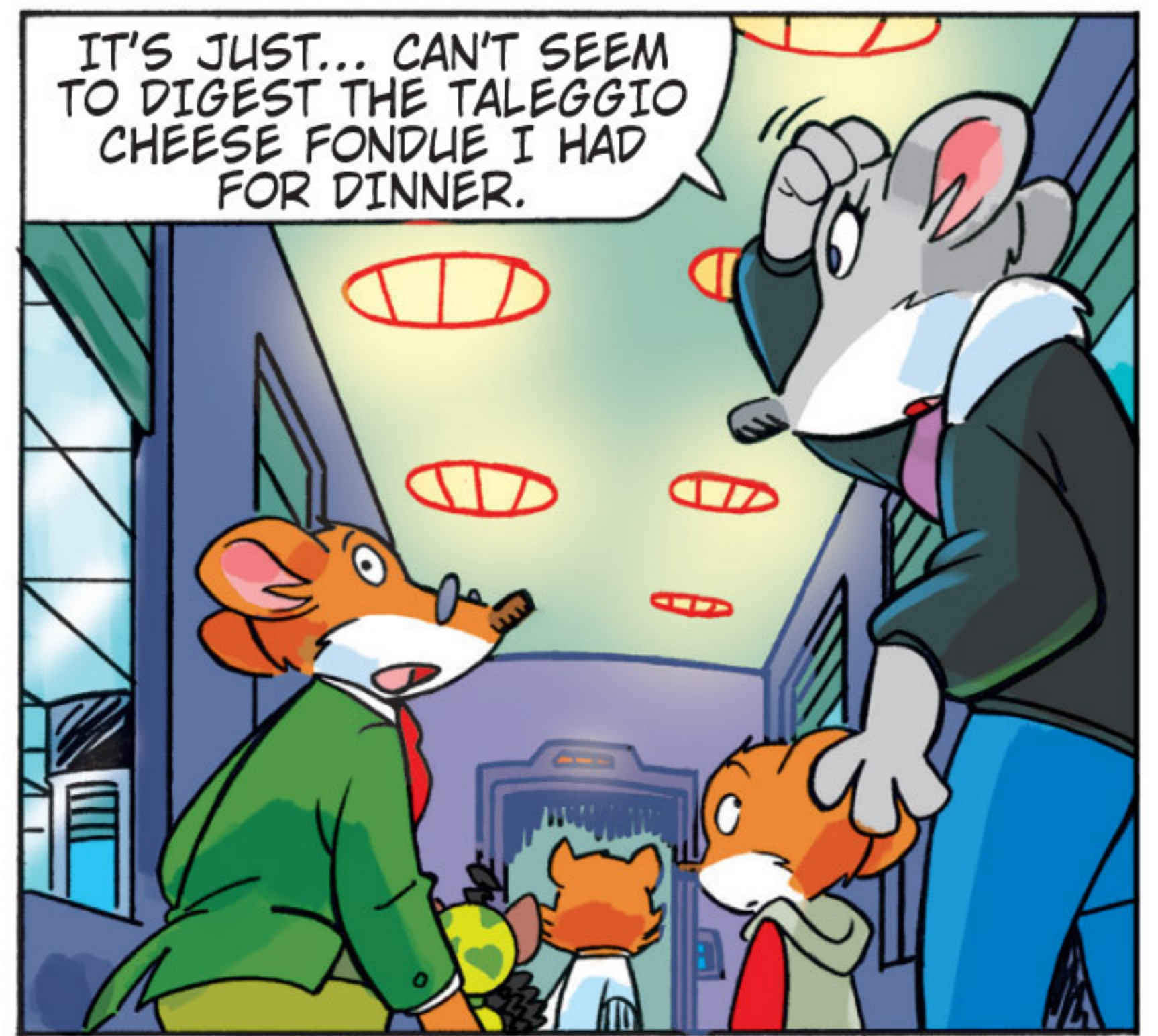
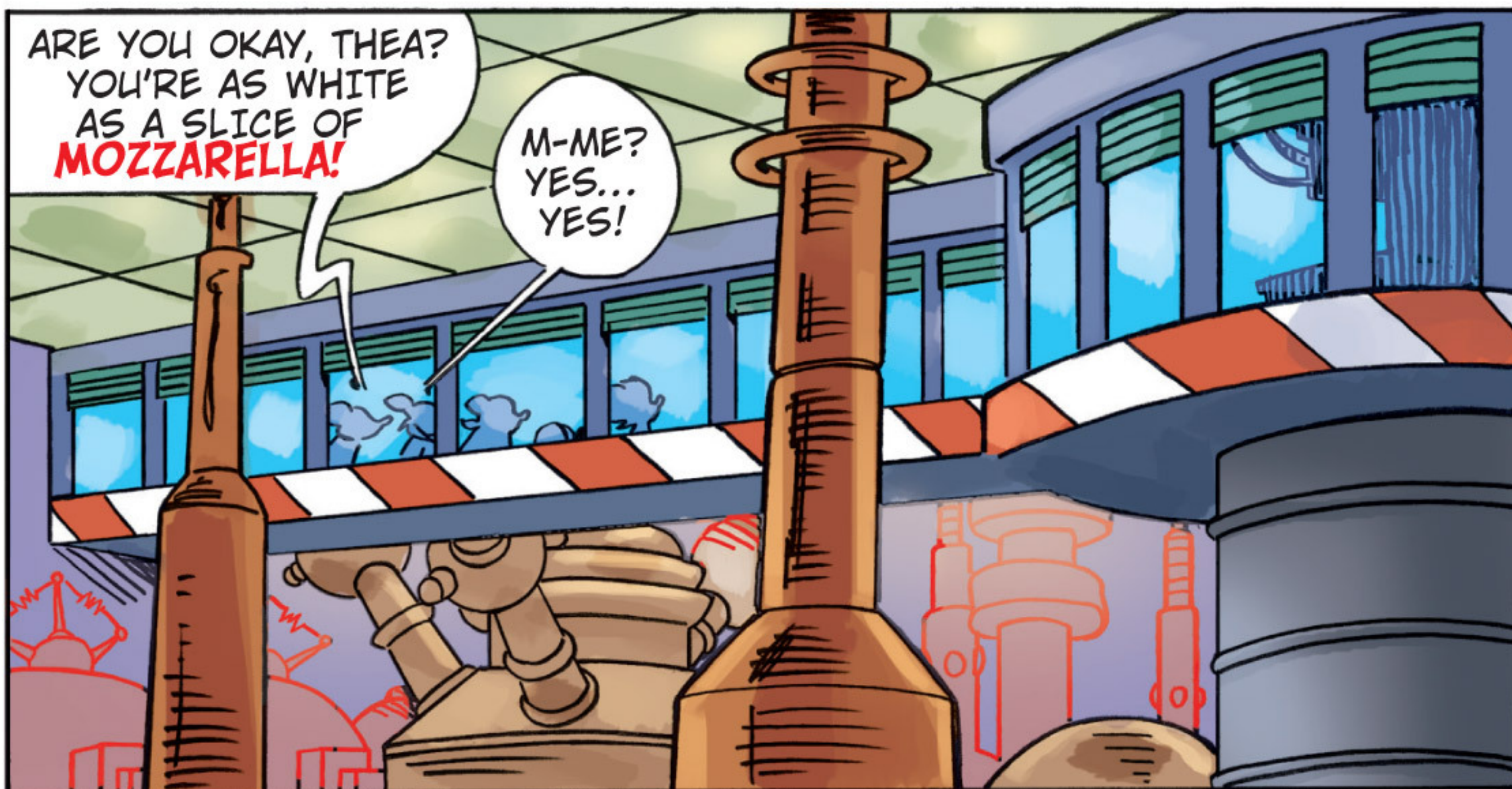
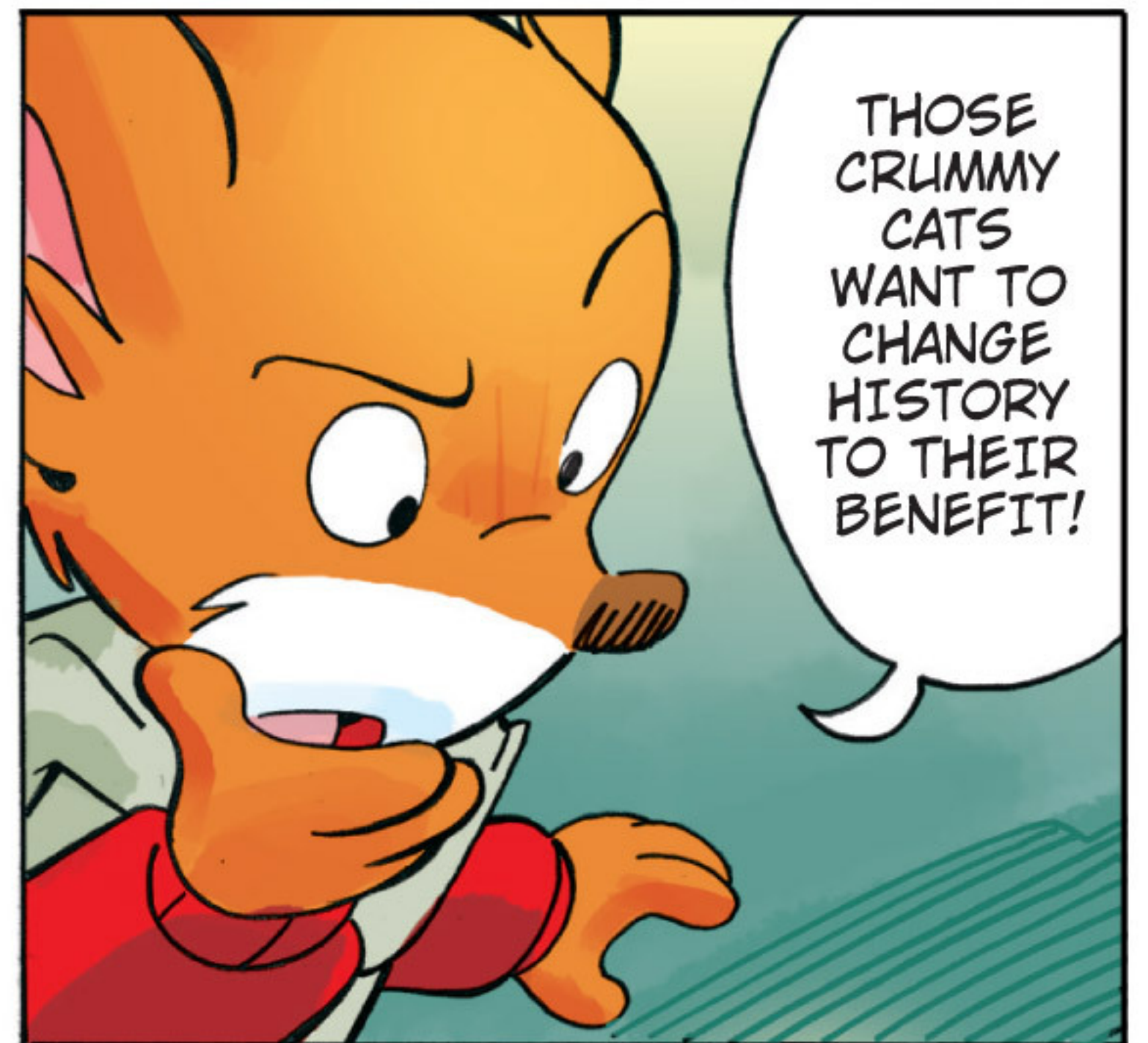


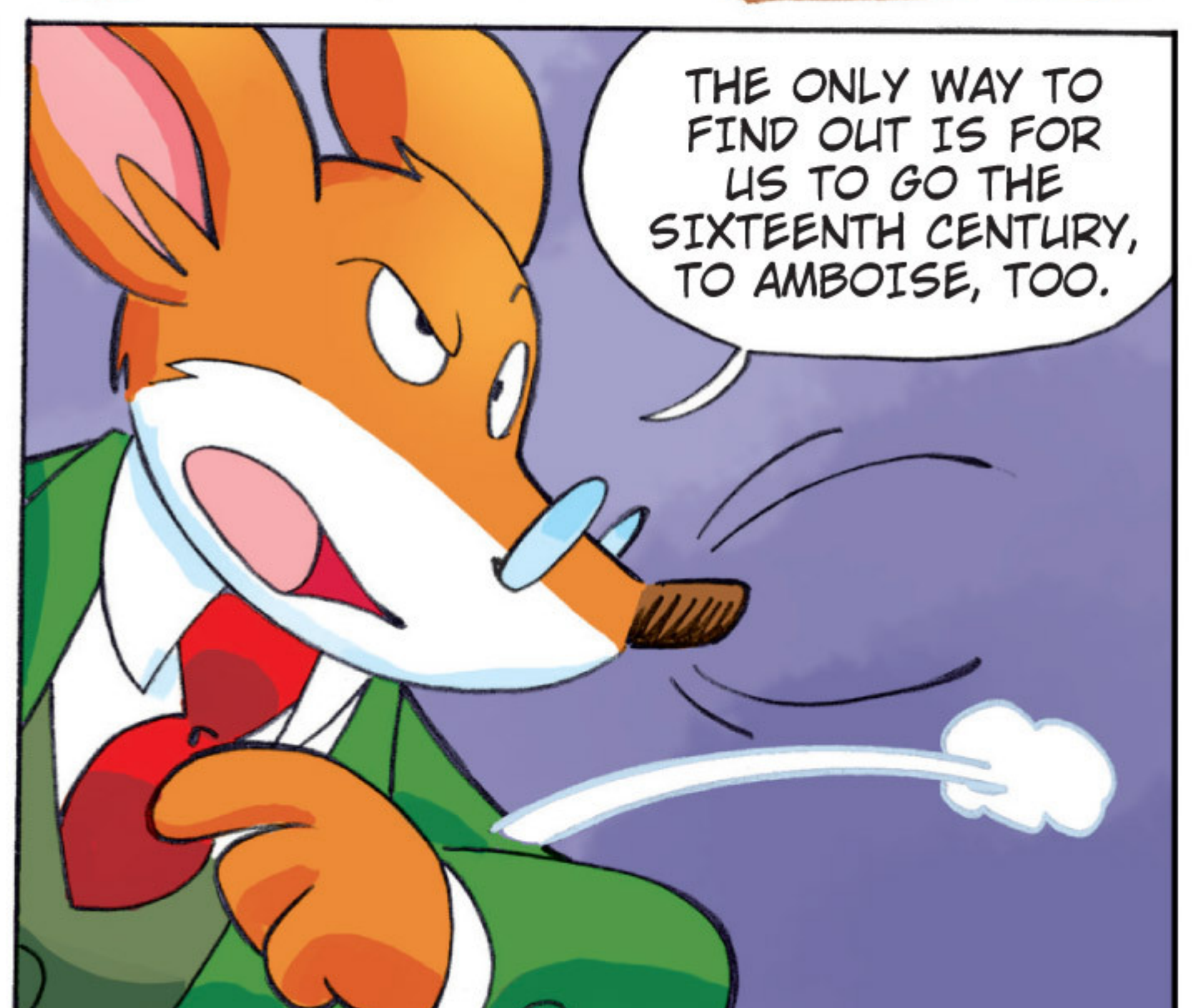
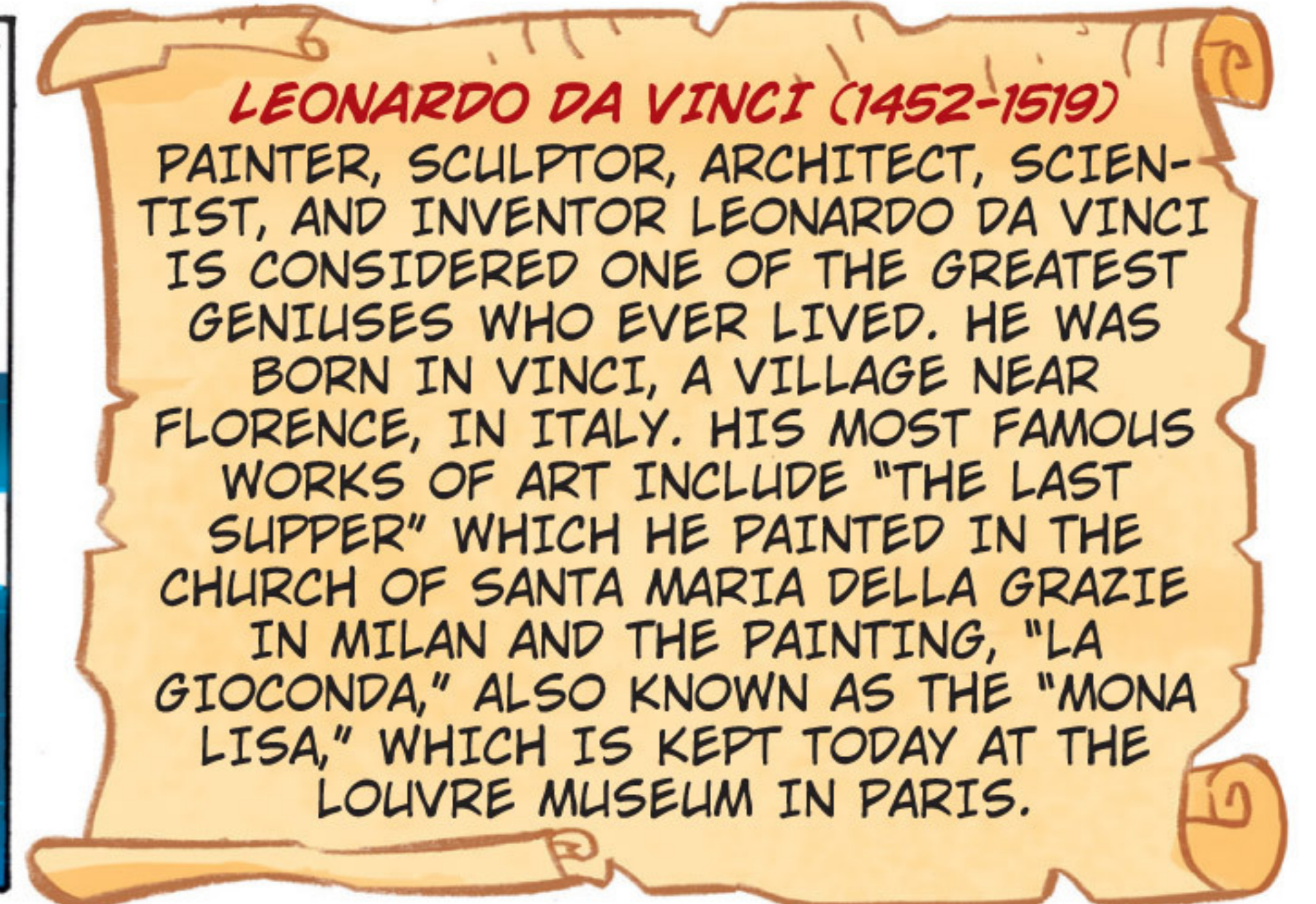
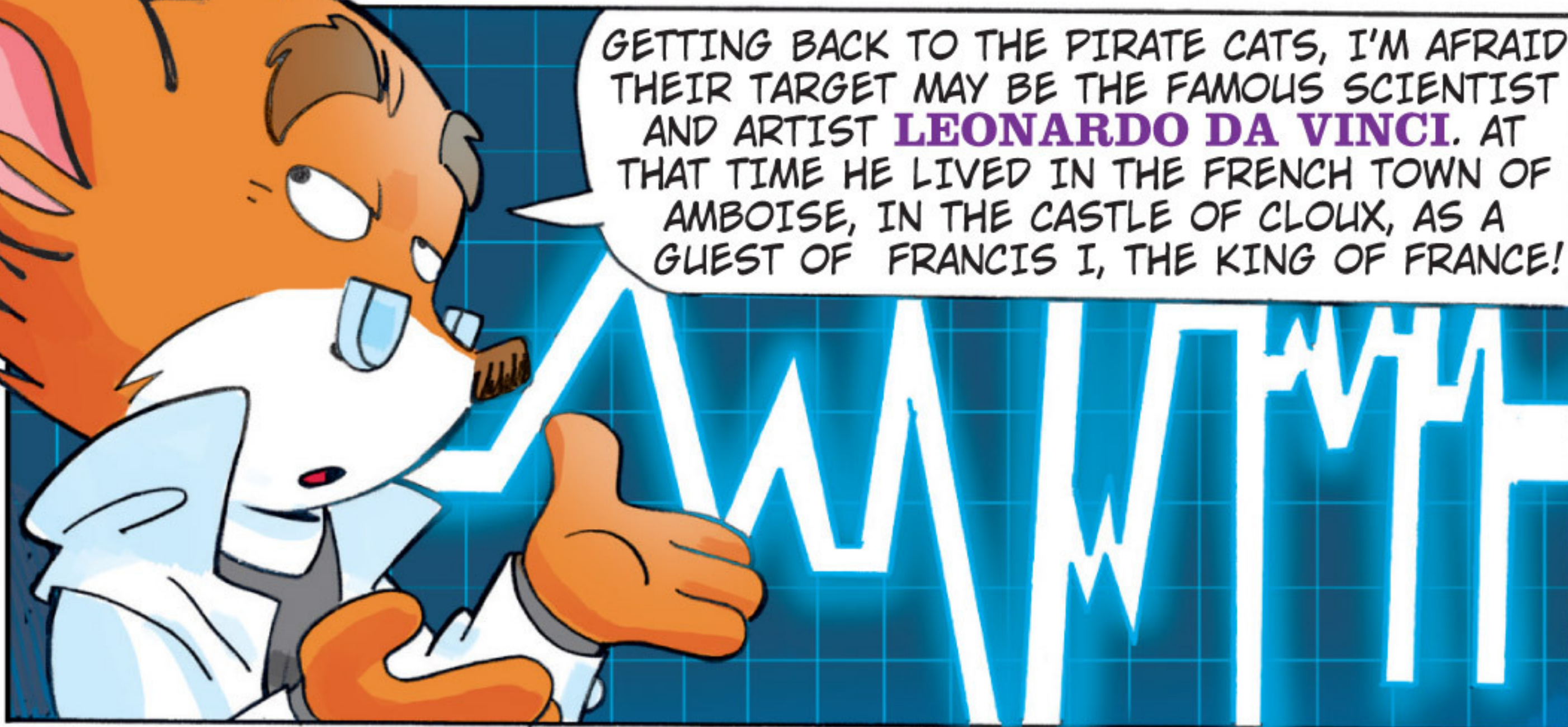
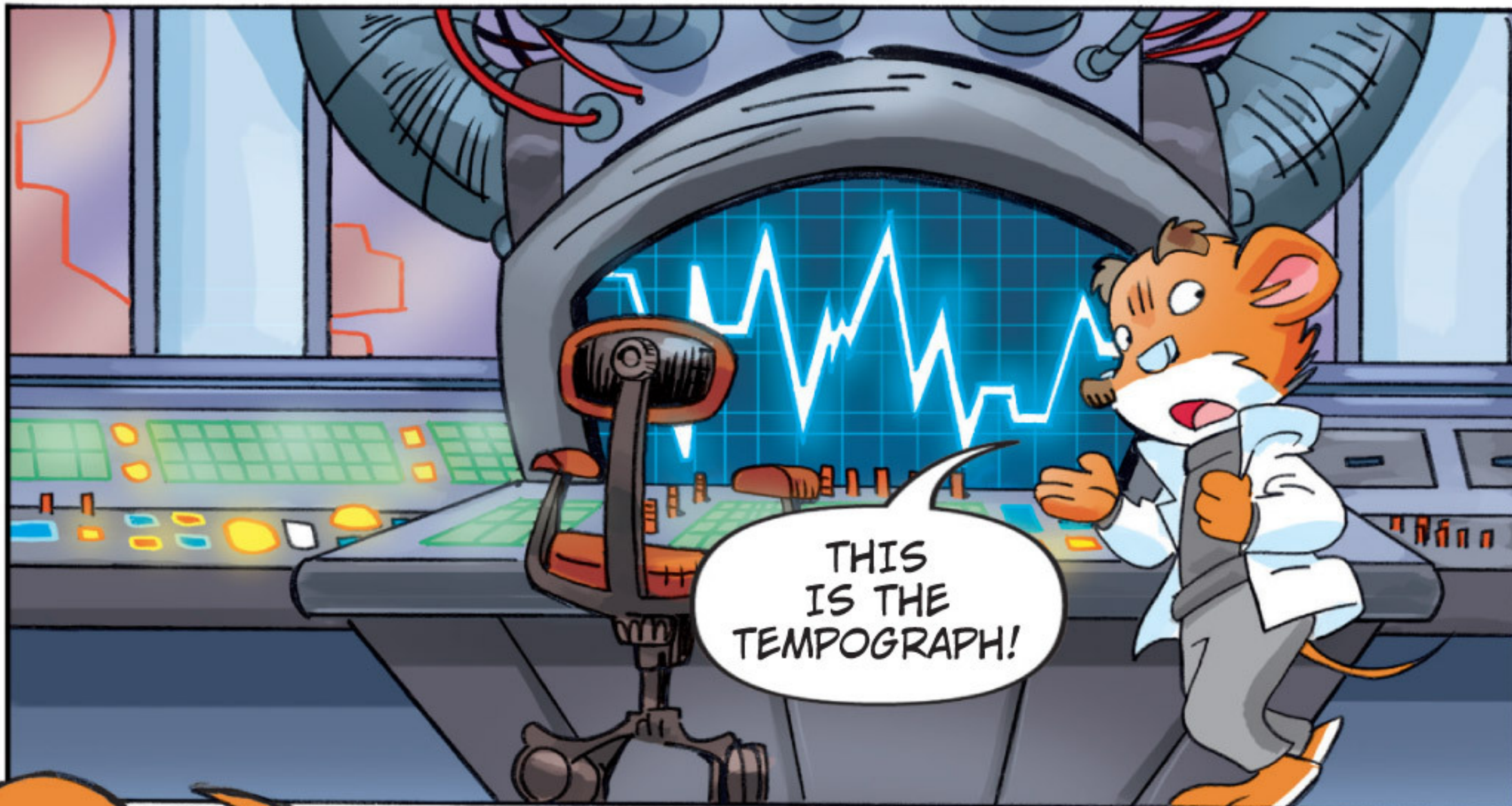
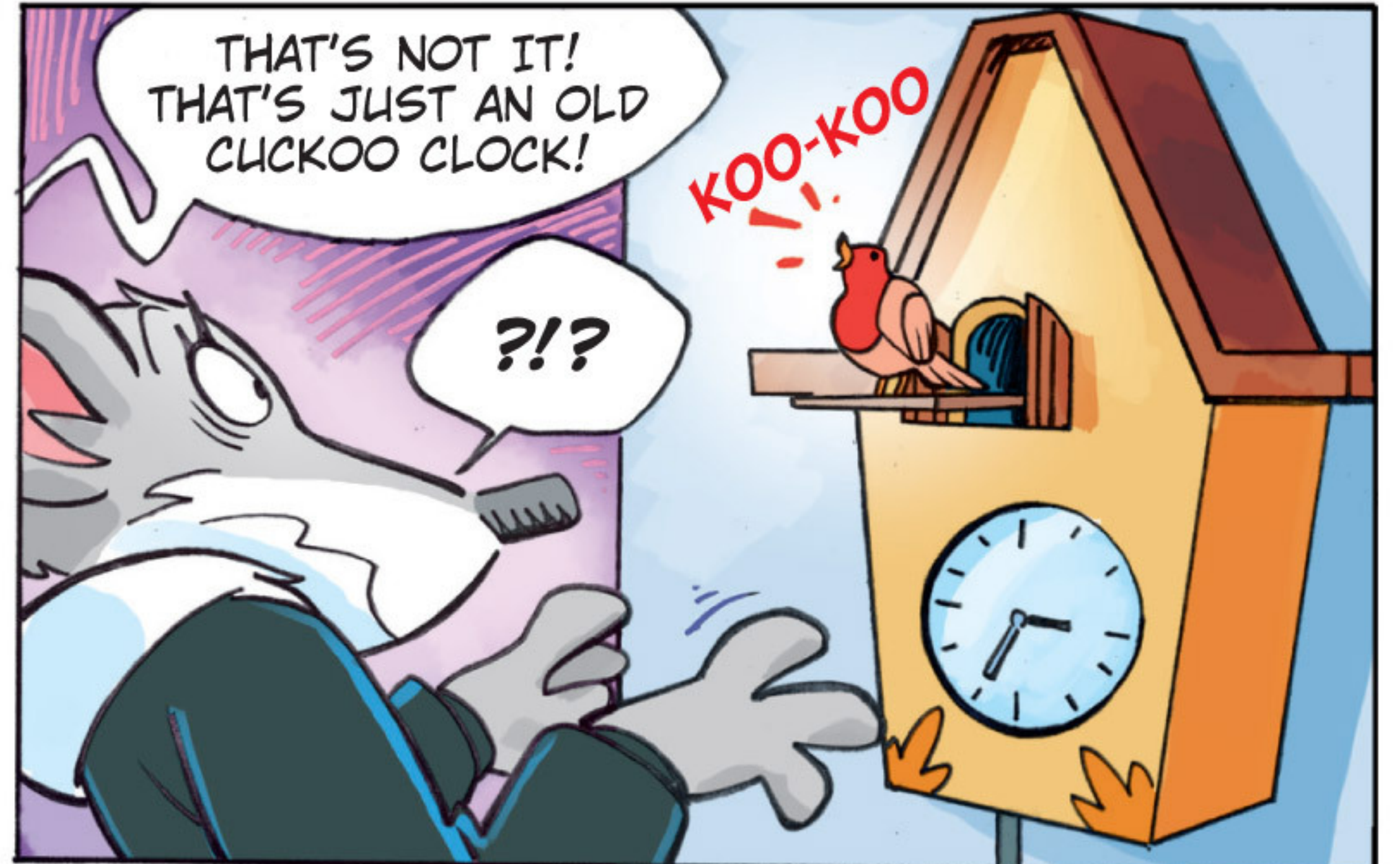
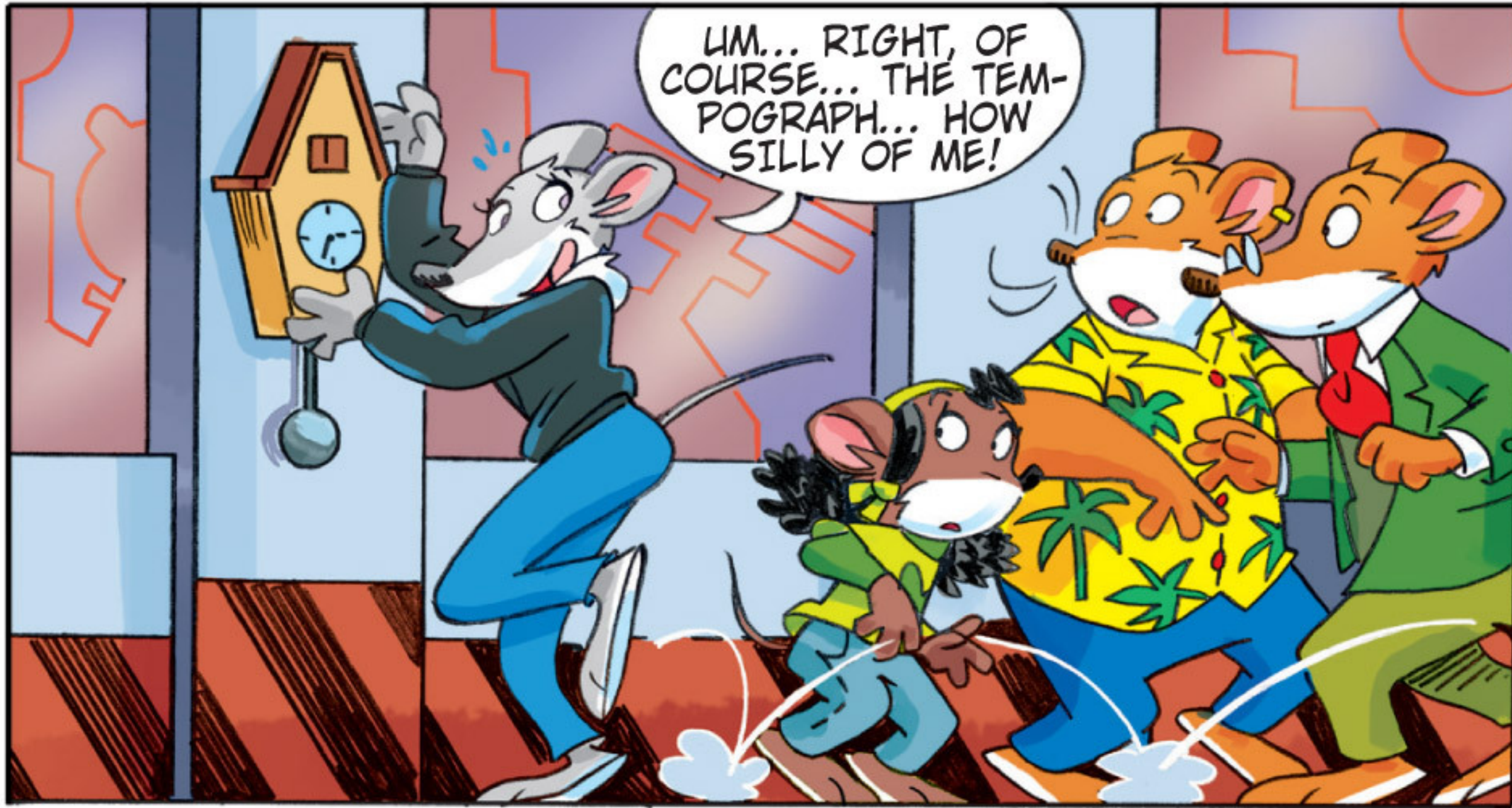




LATER, ALONG WITH THEA, TRAP, BENJAMIN, AND BUGSY WUGSY, I ARRIVED AT VON VOLT'S LAB...







A LITTLE LATER, WE WERE IN THE SPEEDRAT, READY TO GO...

ONBOARD ARE CLOTHES FROM THE PERIOD AND EARPLUGS THAT WILL LET YOU SPEAK THE LOCAL LANGUAGE!

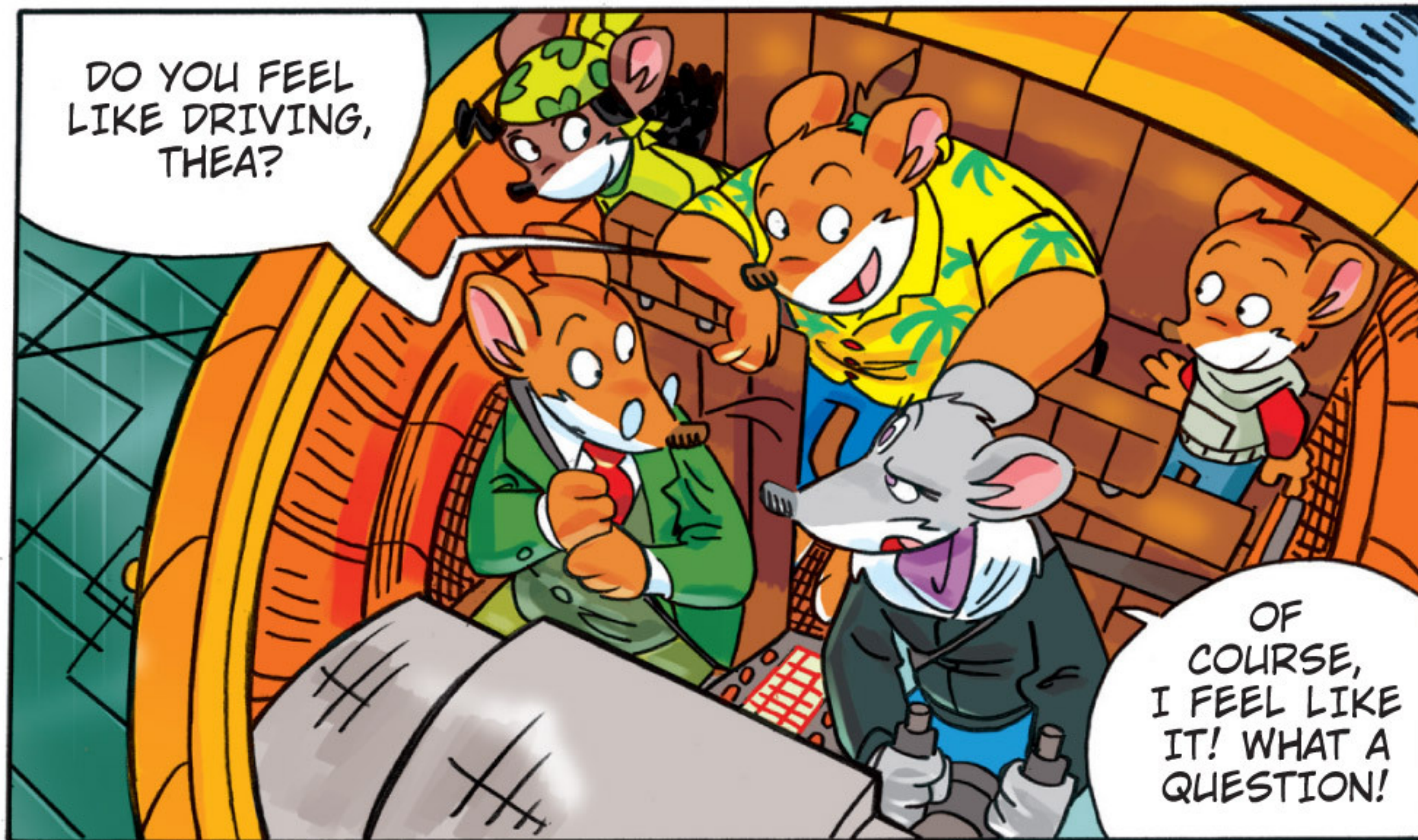


THANKS, PROFESSOR! DON'T WORRY, WE'LL STOP THE PIRATE CATS!



DO YOU FEEL LIKE DRIVING, THEA?

OF COURSE, I FEEL LIKE IT! WHAT A QUESTION!



LET'S SEE... HOW DO I TURN THIS THING ON?



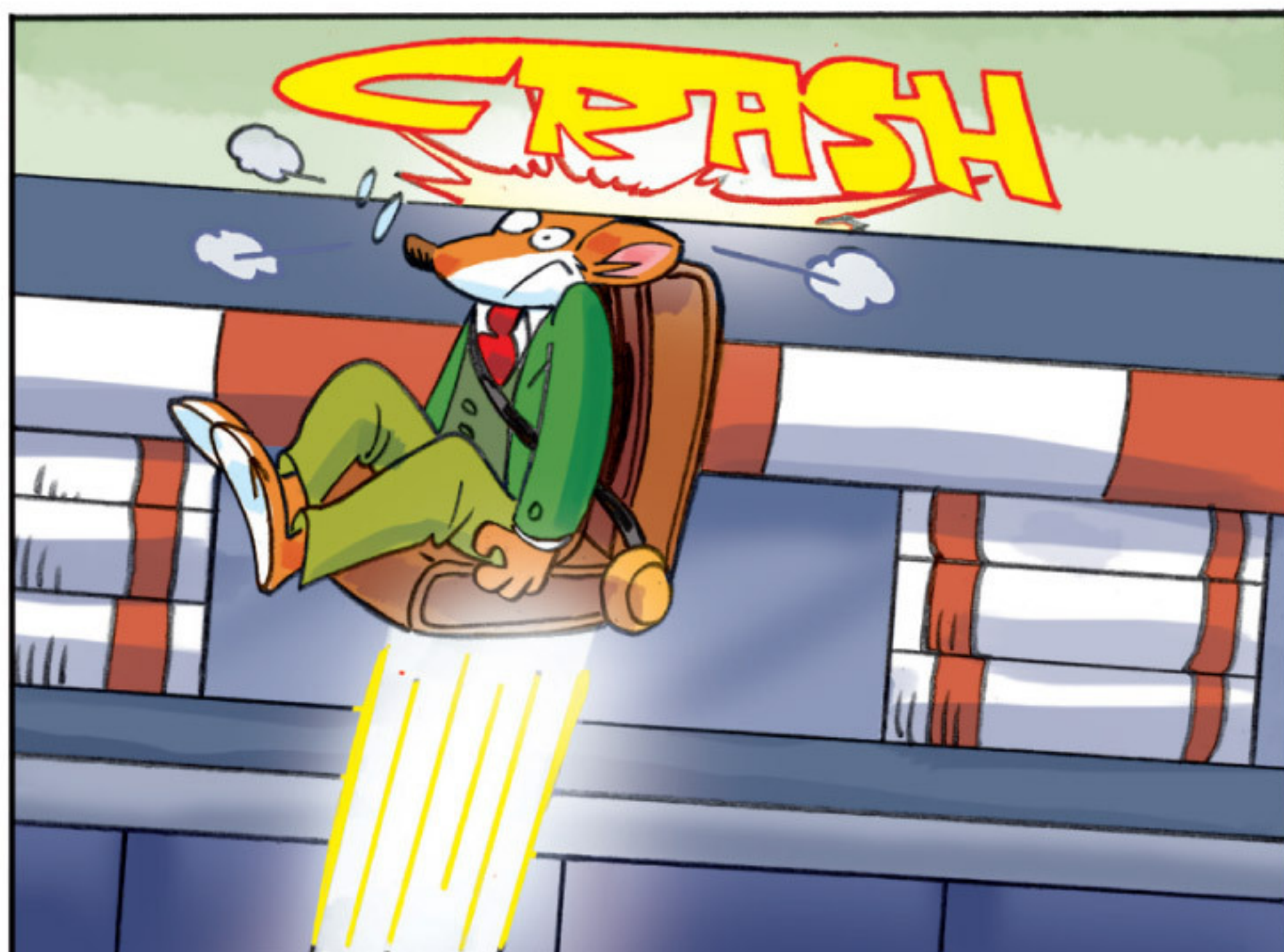
HMMM... LET'S TRY THIS **BUTTON!**



?!?



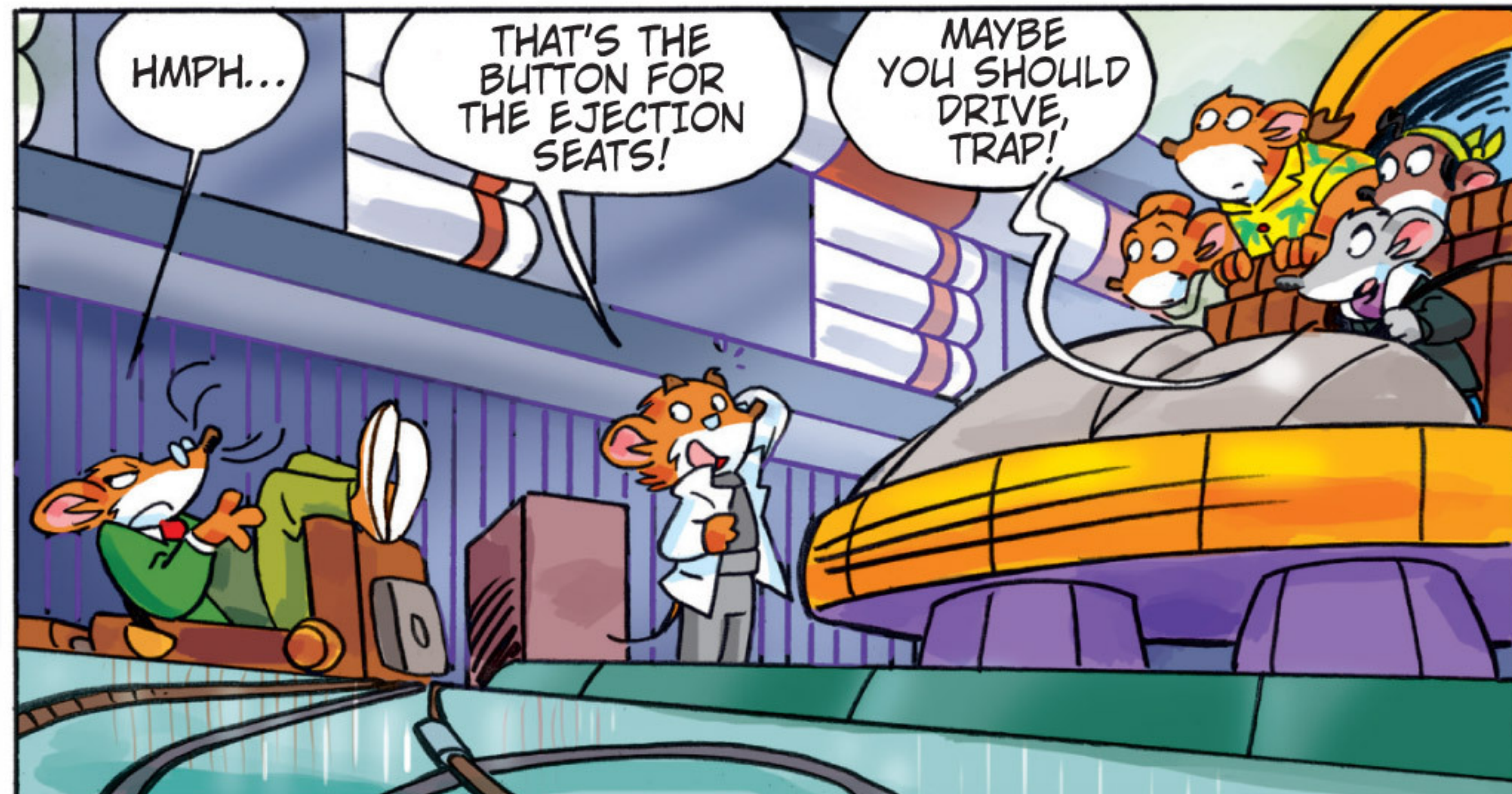
CRASH

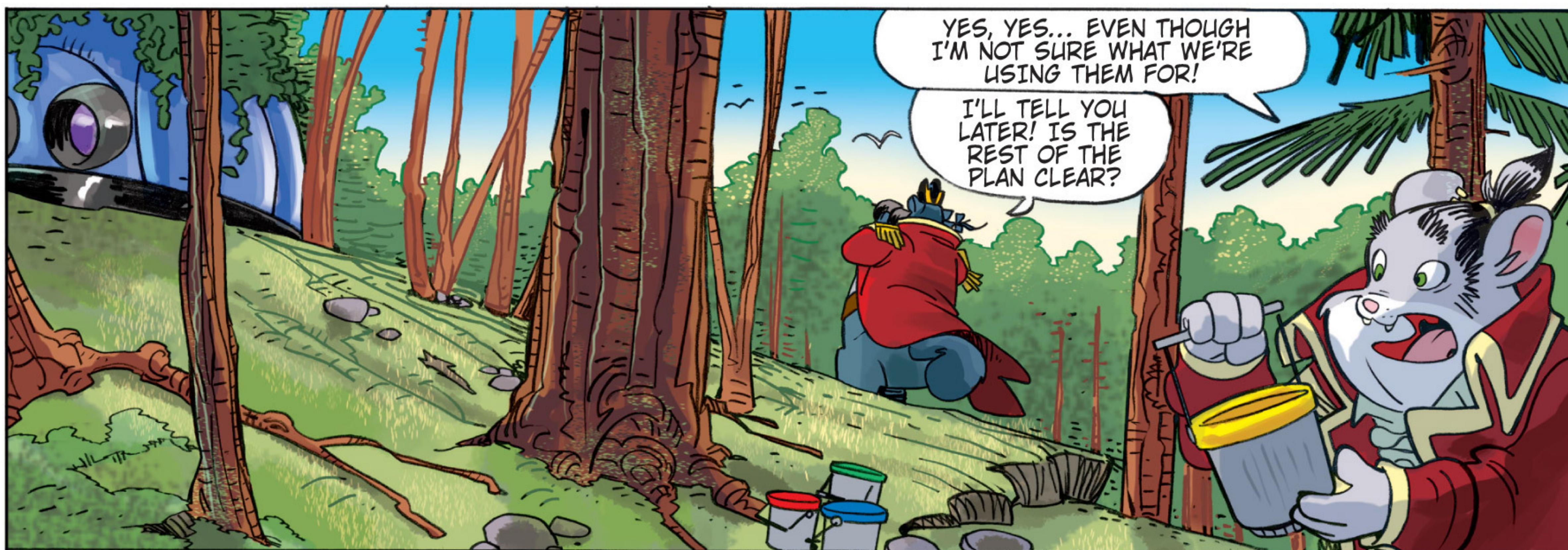
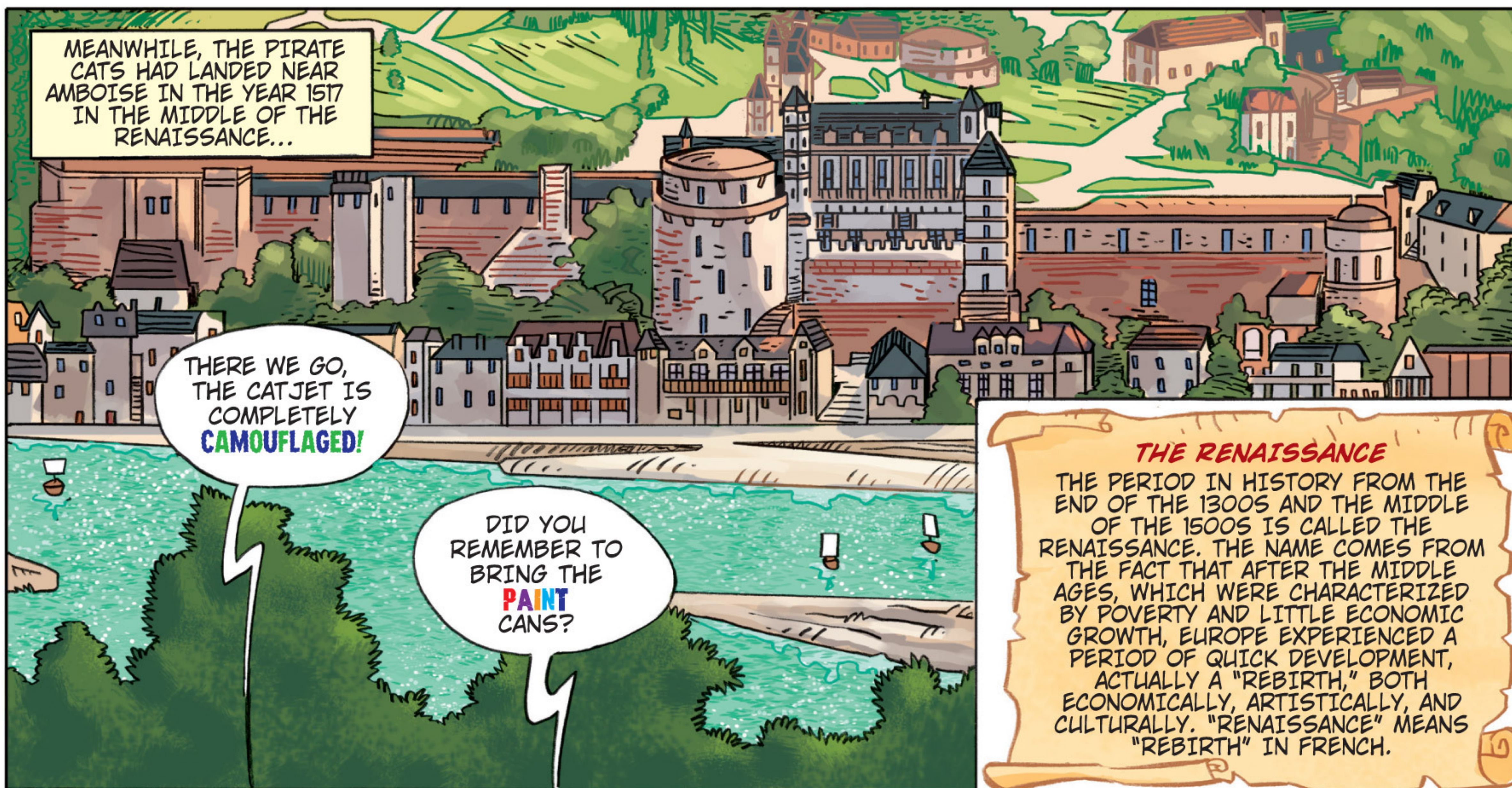


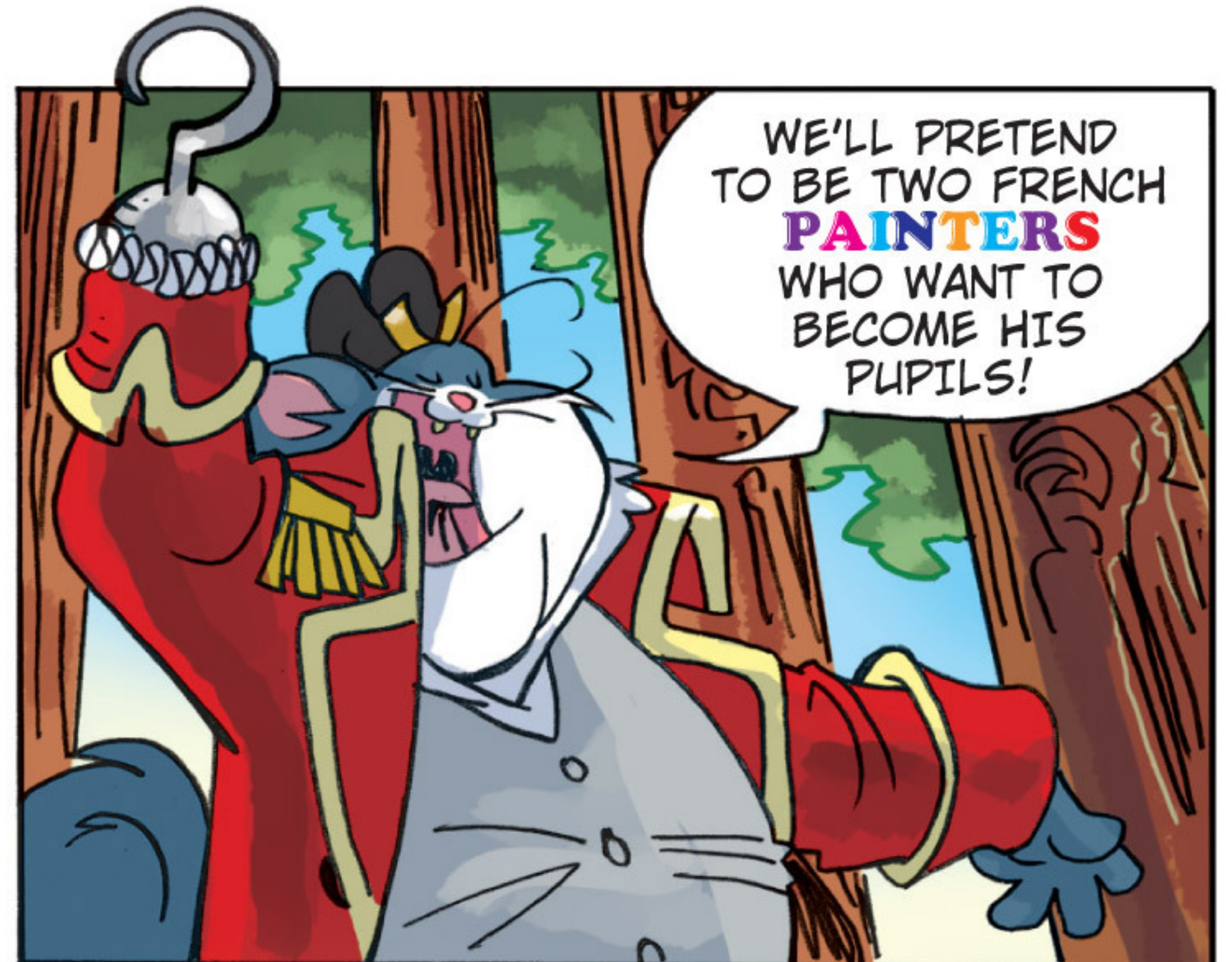
HMPH...

THAT'S THE BUTTON FOR THE EJECTION SEATS!

MAYBE YOU SHOULD DRIVE, TRAP!

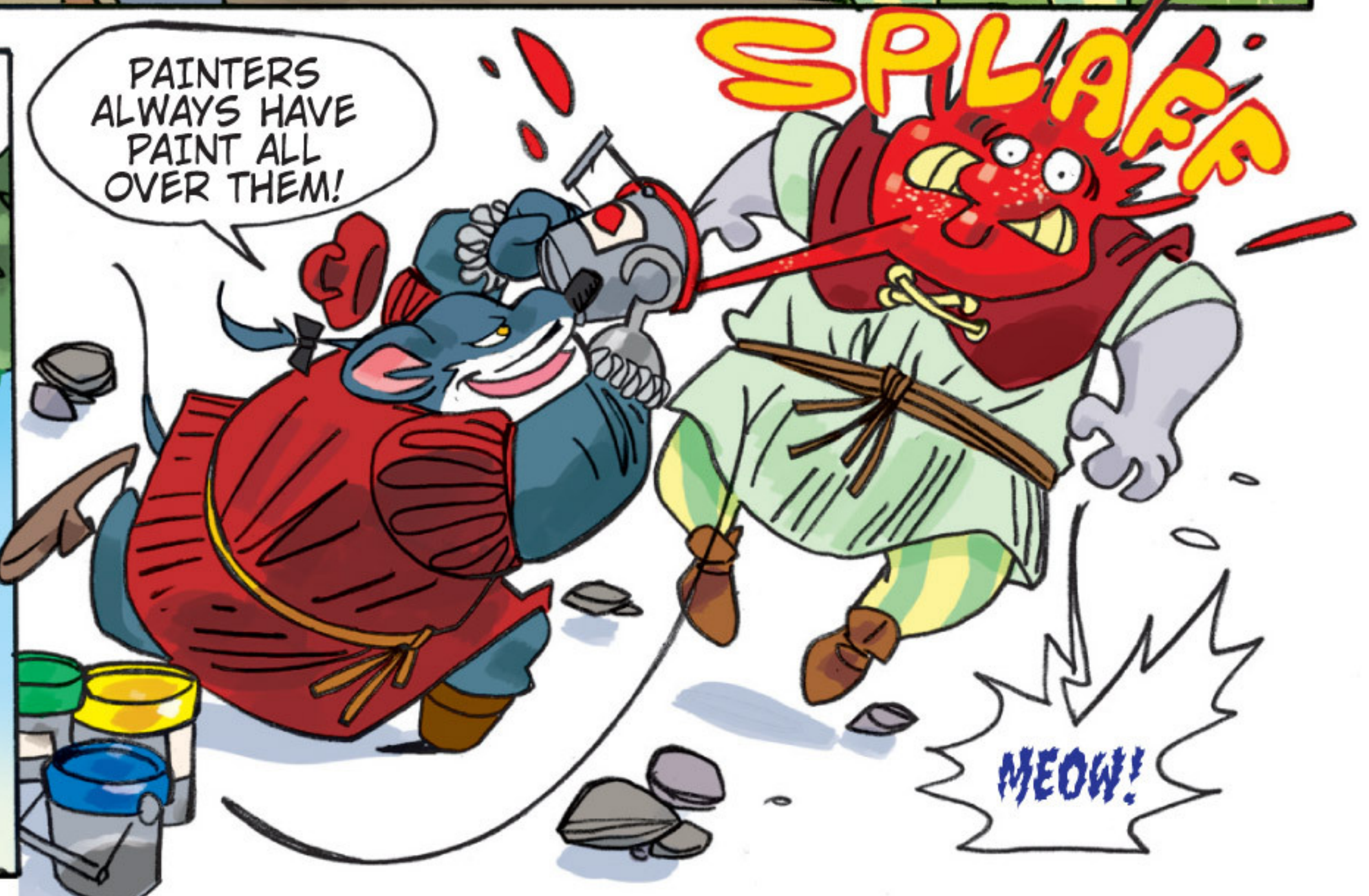






PAINTING IN THE RENAISSANCE

DURING THIS PERIOD, PAINTERS PERFECTED THE USE OF PERSPECTIVE TO PORTRAY THE DEPTH AND PROPORTIONS OF OBJECTS JUST AS WE SEE THEM (FOR EXAMPLE, BY DRAWING OBJECTS THAT ARE FAR AWAY SMALLER). PAINTERS ALSO PAID A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION TO STUDYING THE BODY AND ITS MOVEMENT ANATOMICALLY.





NOW YOU REALLY
LOOK LIKE A PAINTER!
SHALL I GIVE YOU
A COAT OF YELLOW
PAINT, TOO?



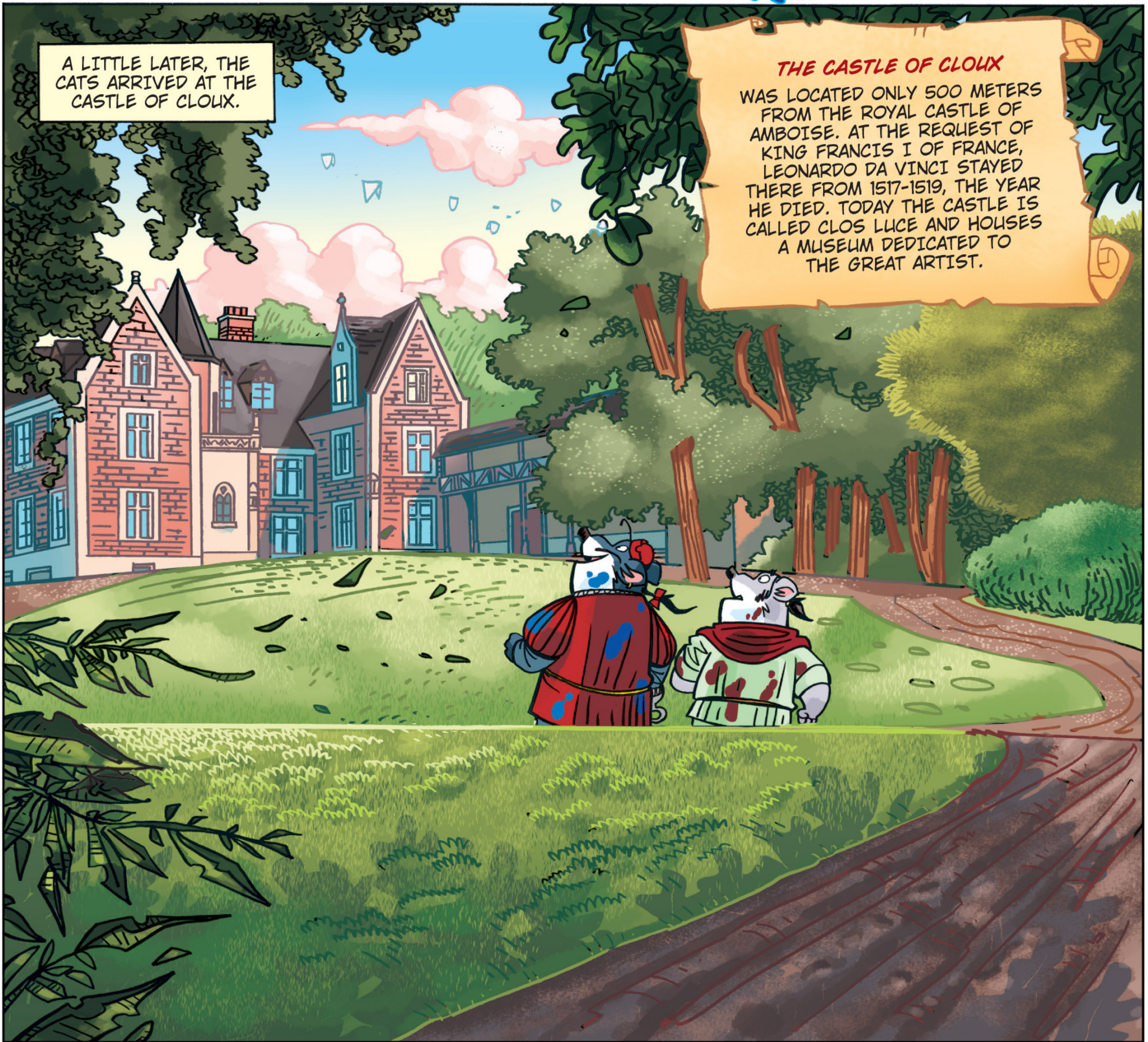
FIRST LET ME
GIVE YOU A
HAND!

->GULP!<-



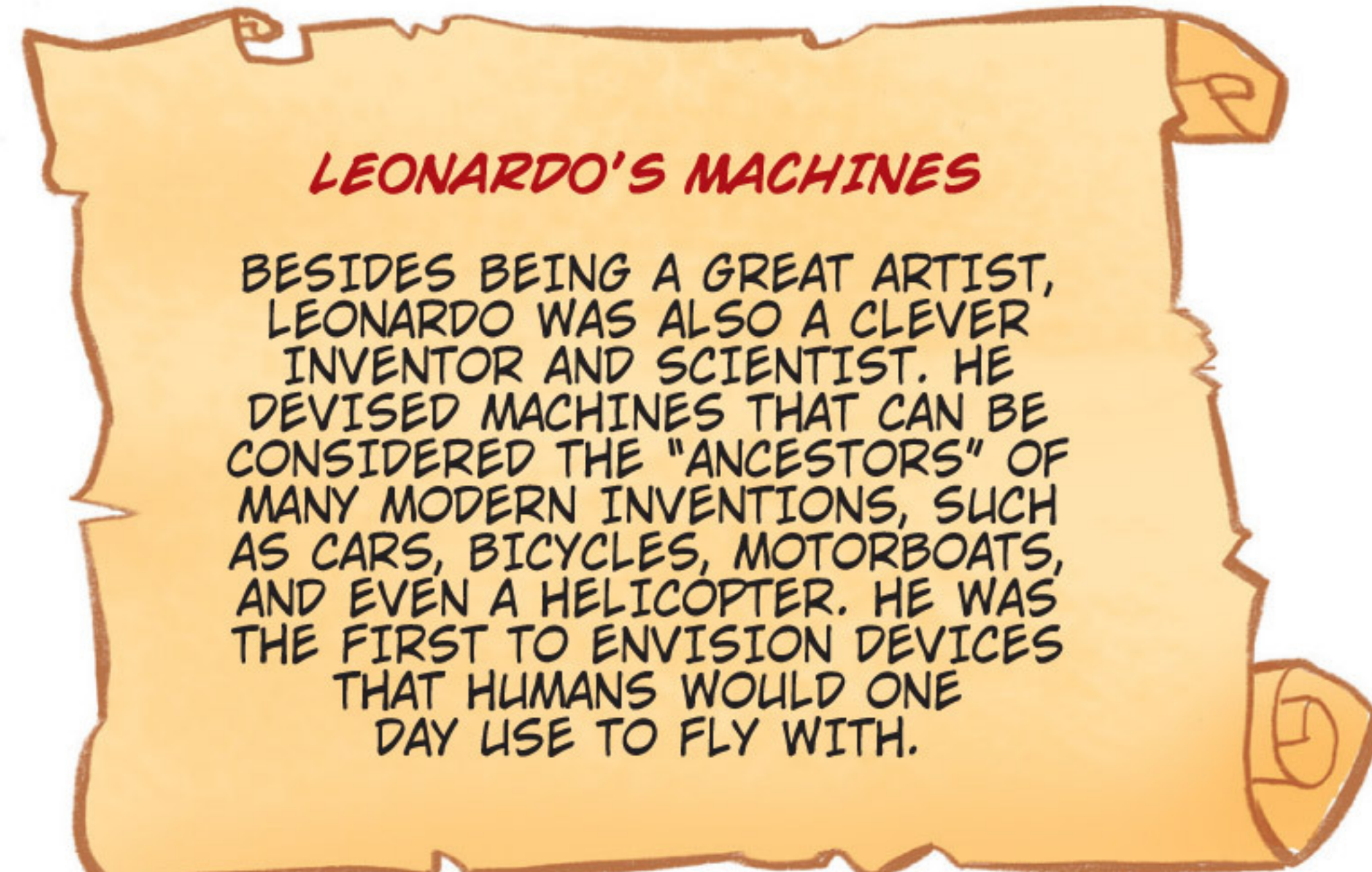
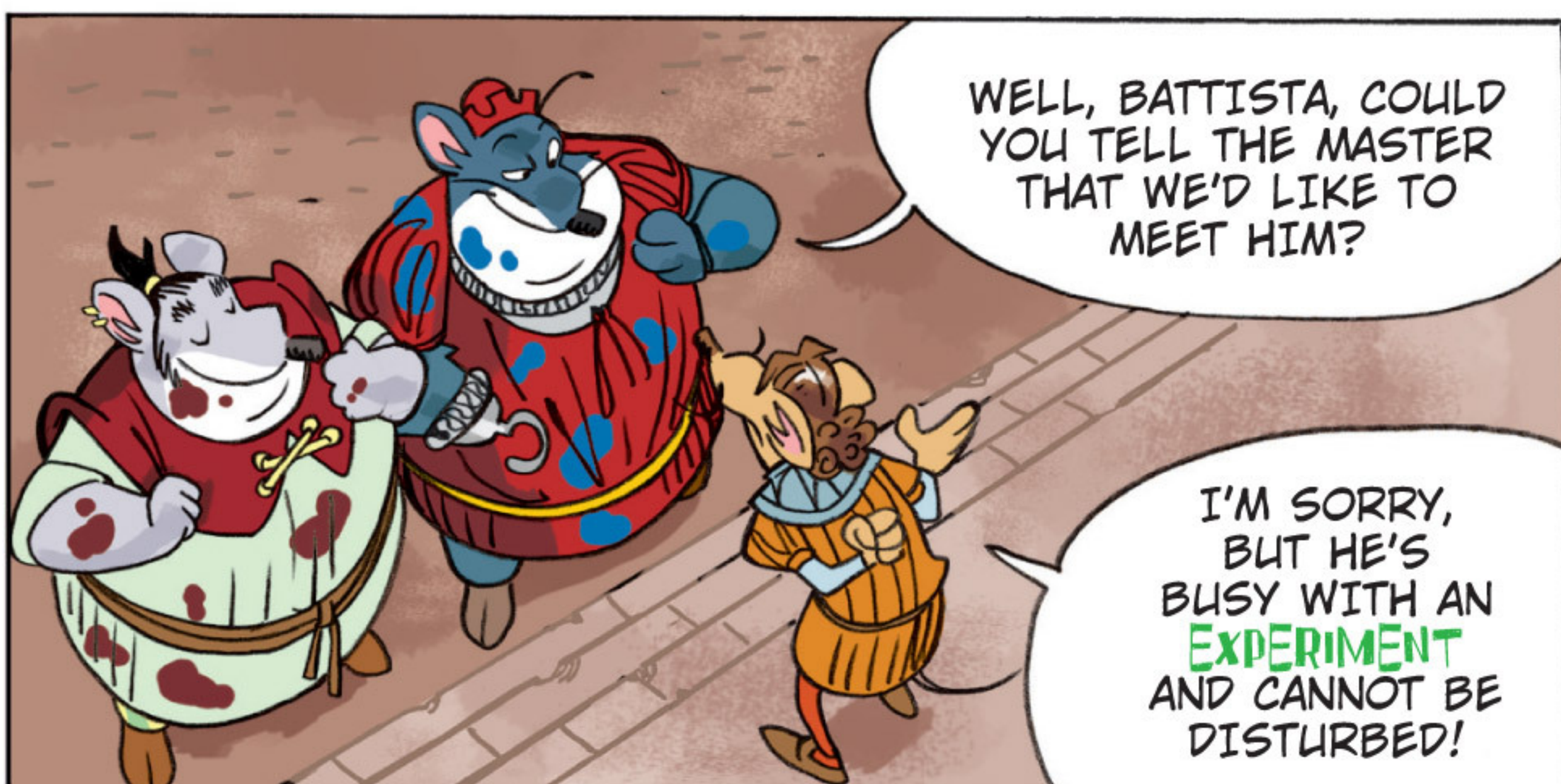
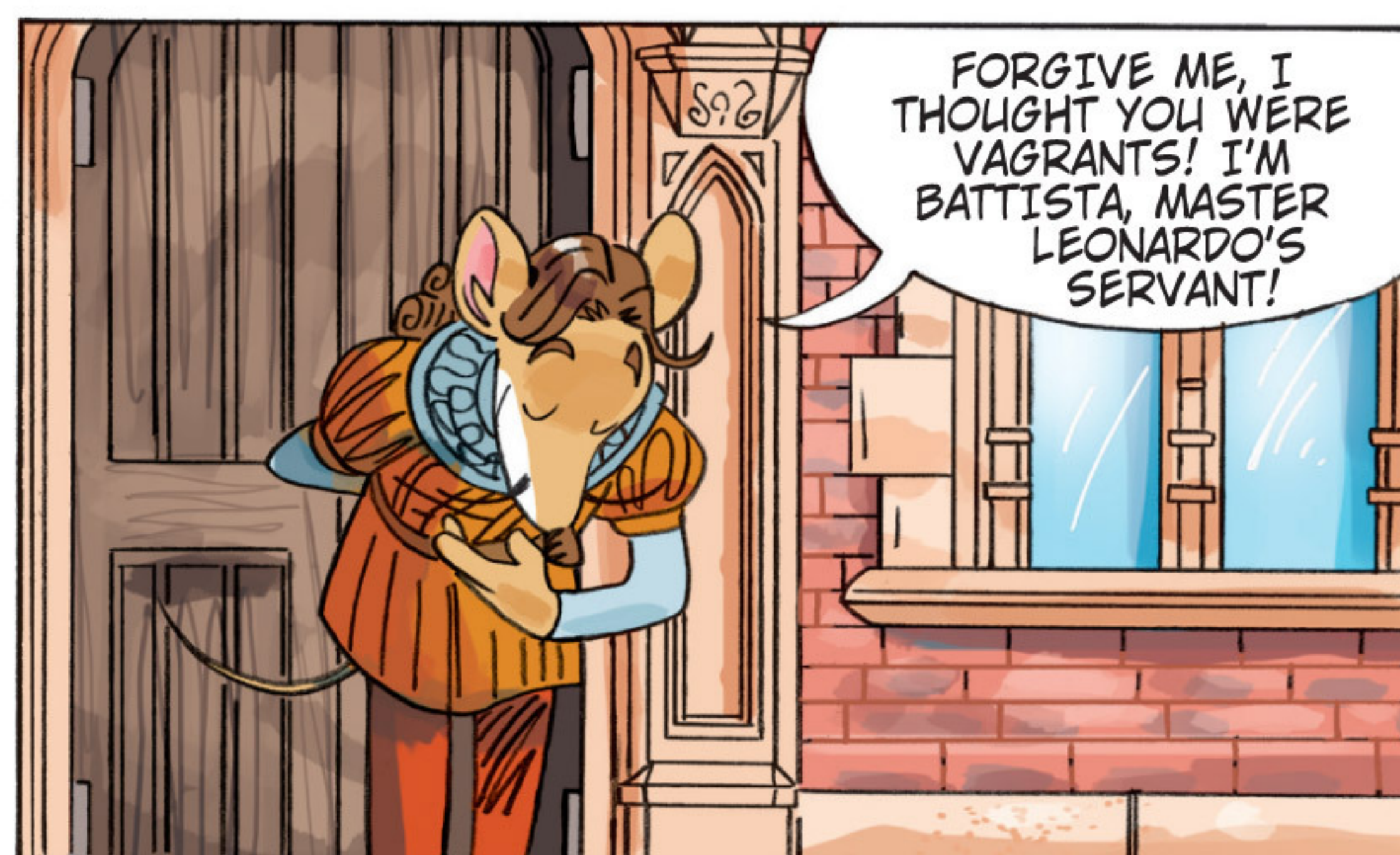
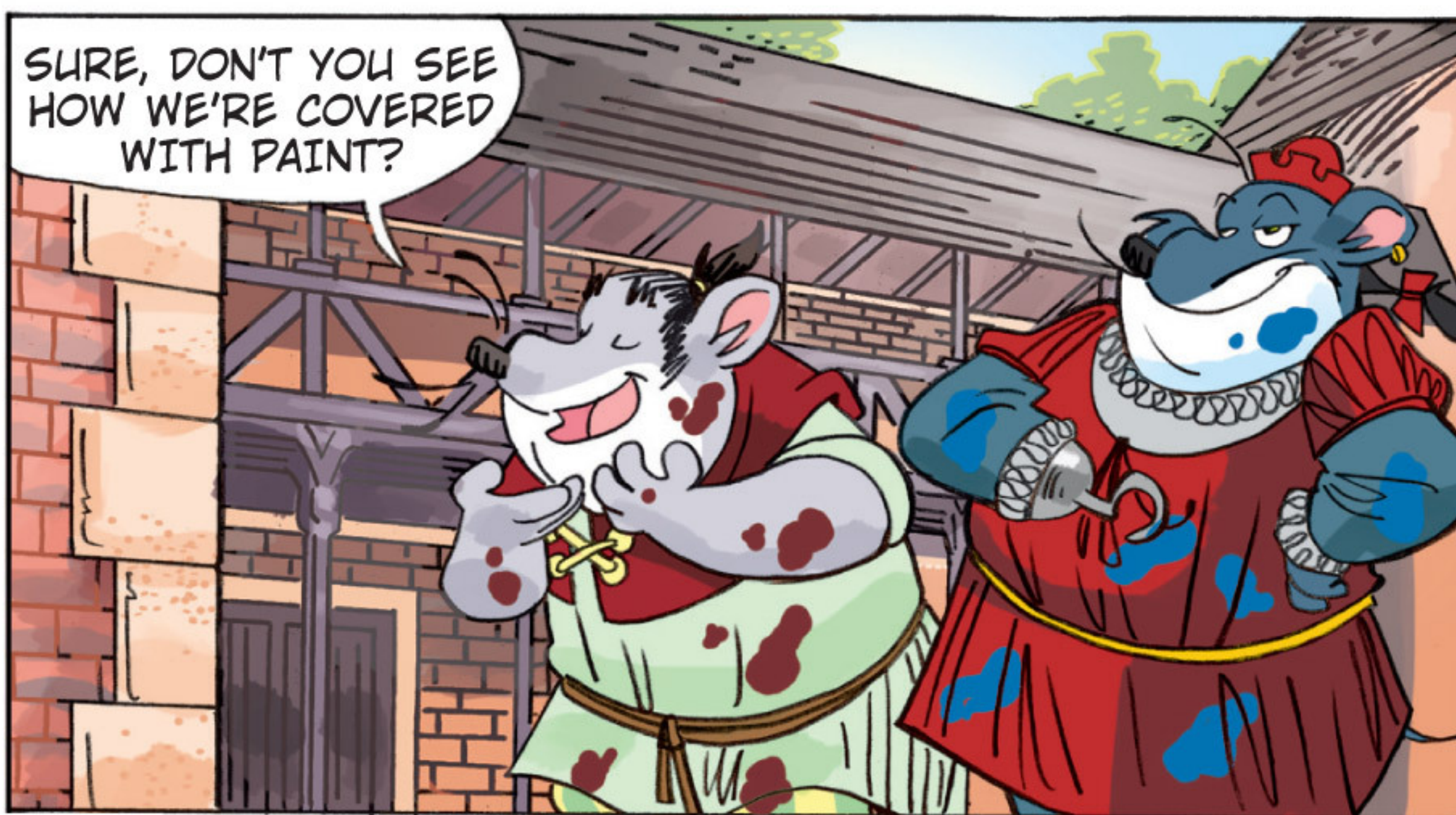
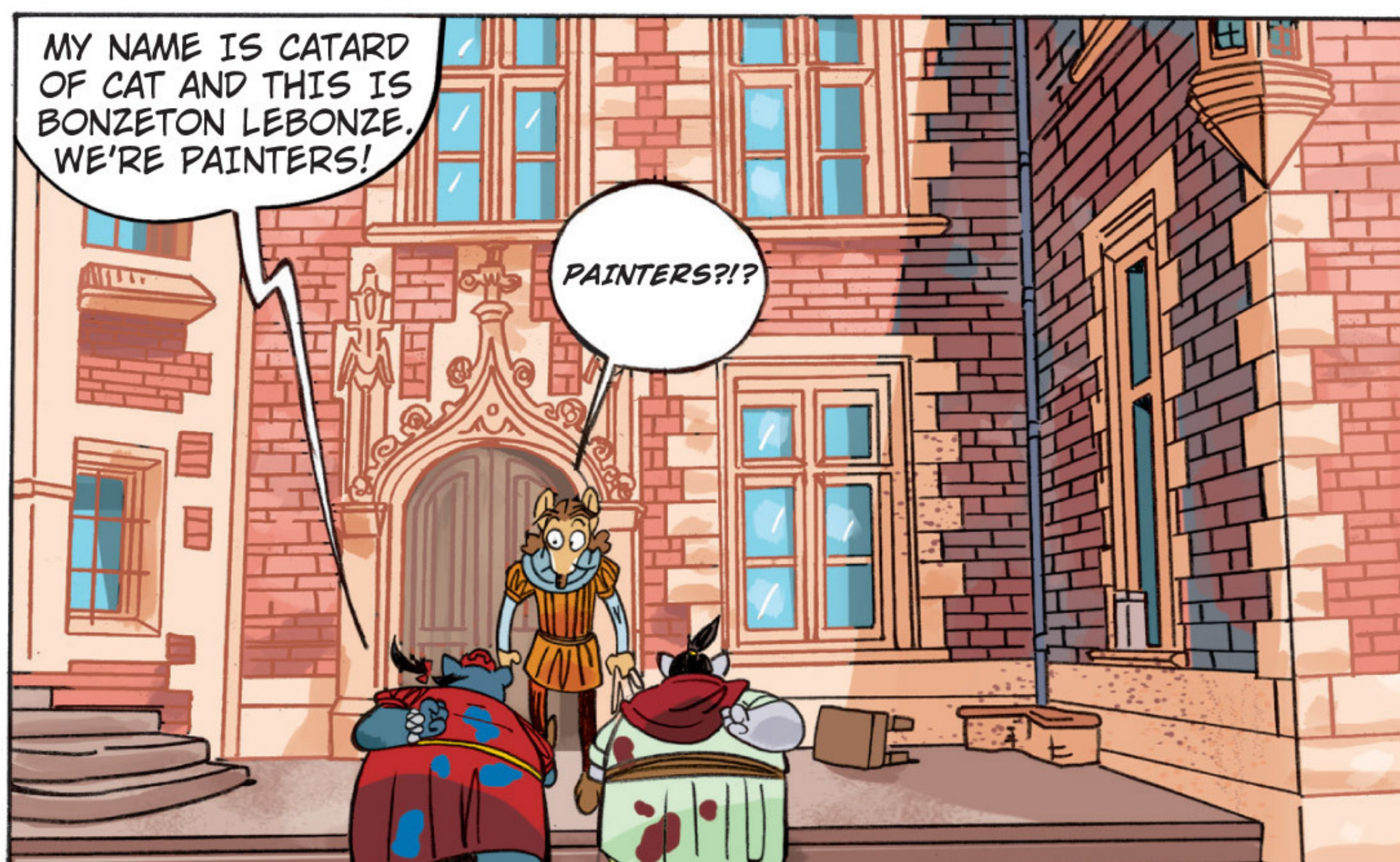
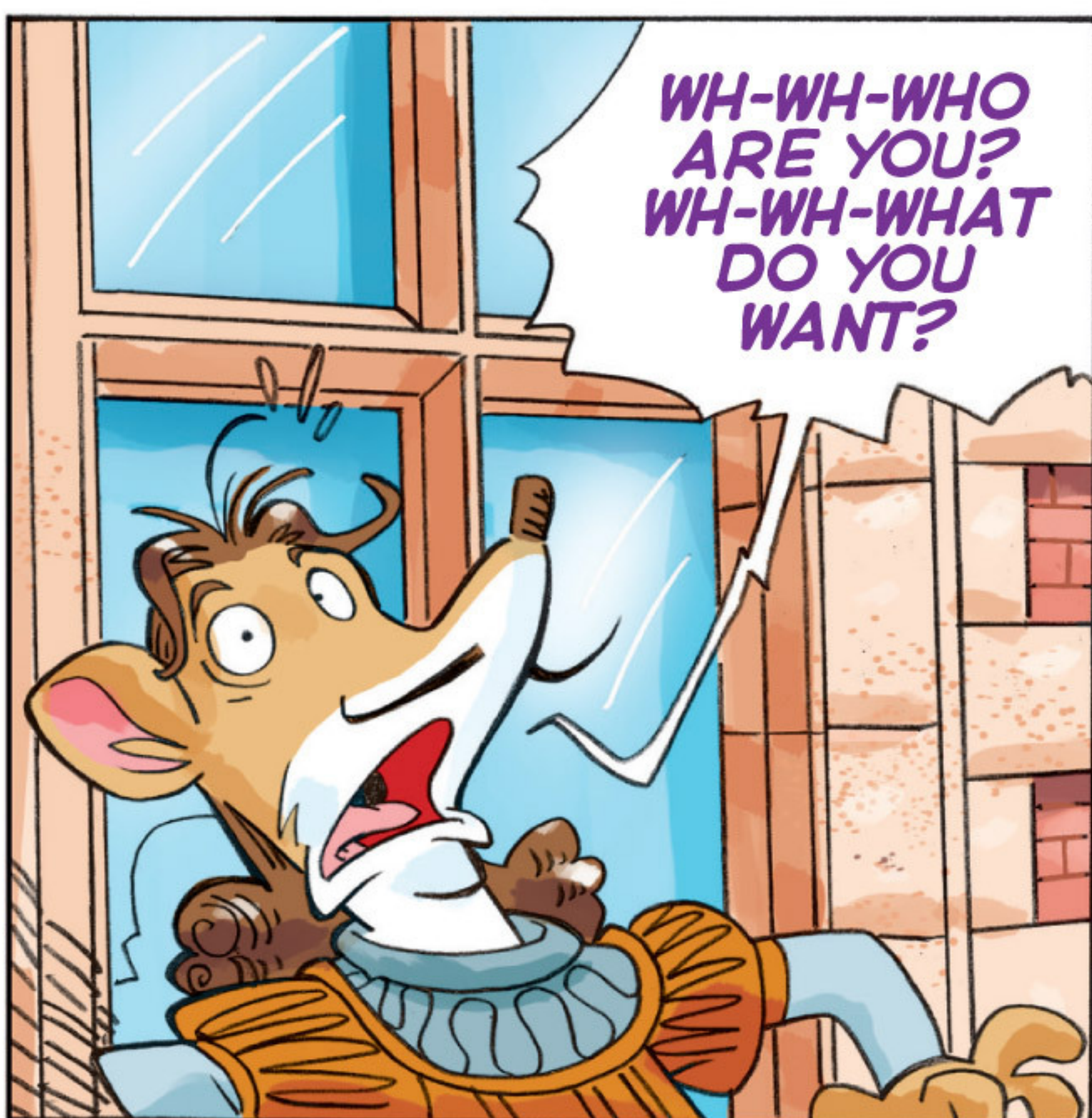
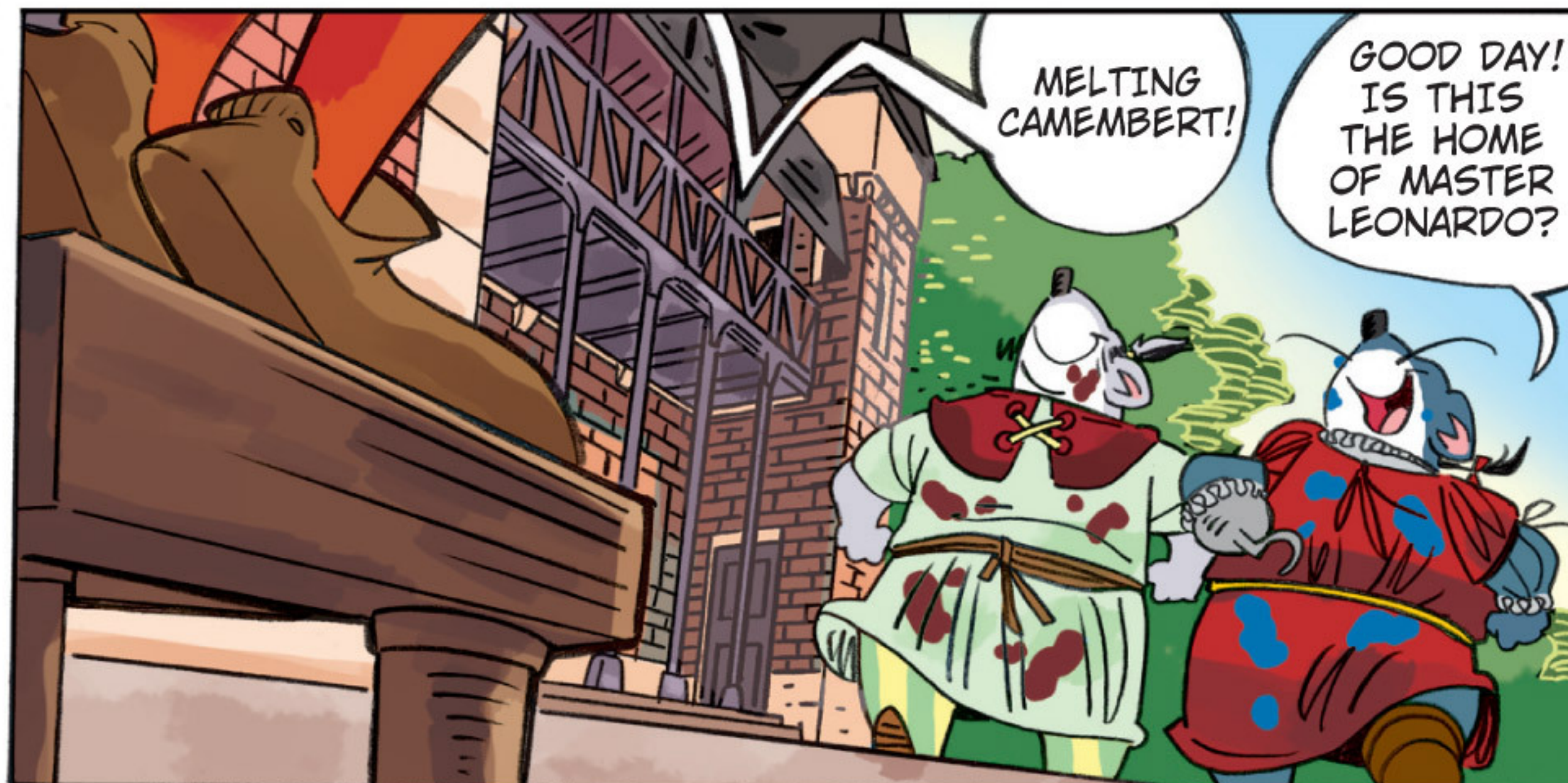
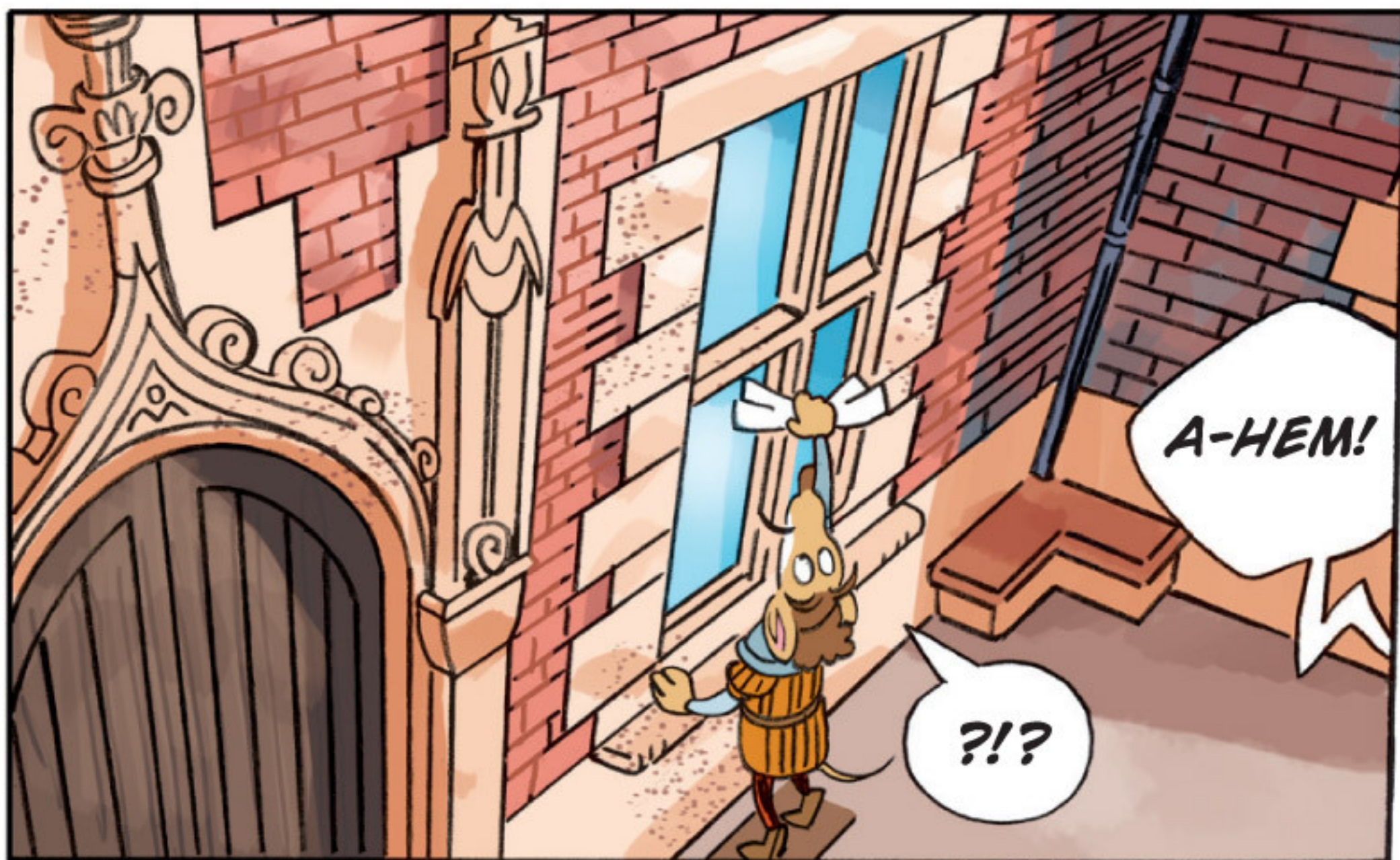
HOW
DARE YOU!?!?
GRRR...
I'LL... I'LL...
ATOMIZE*
YOU!

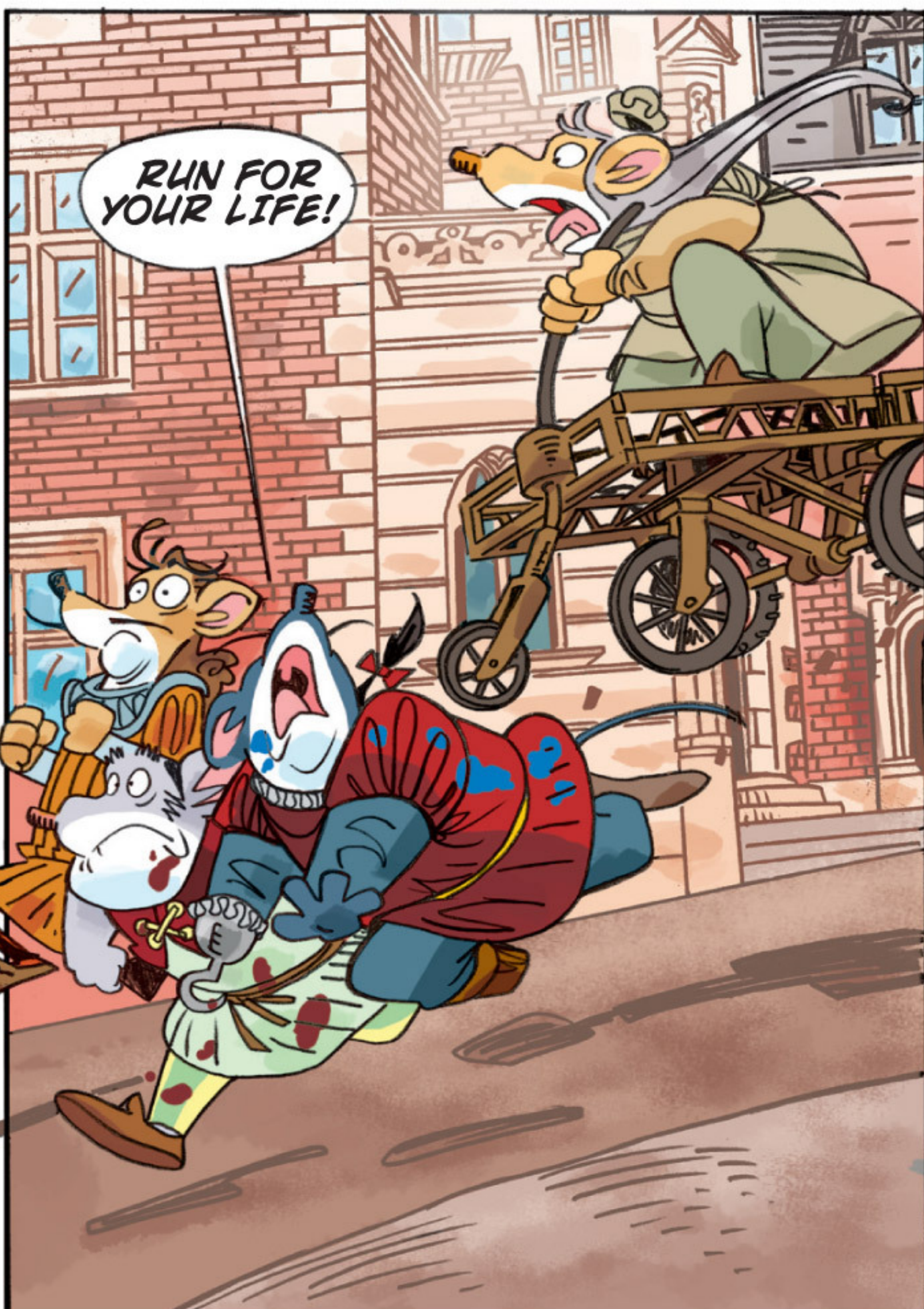
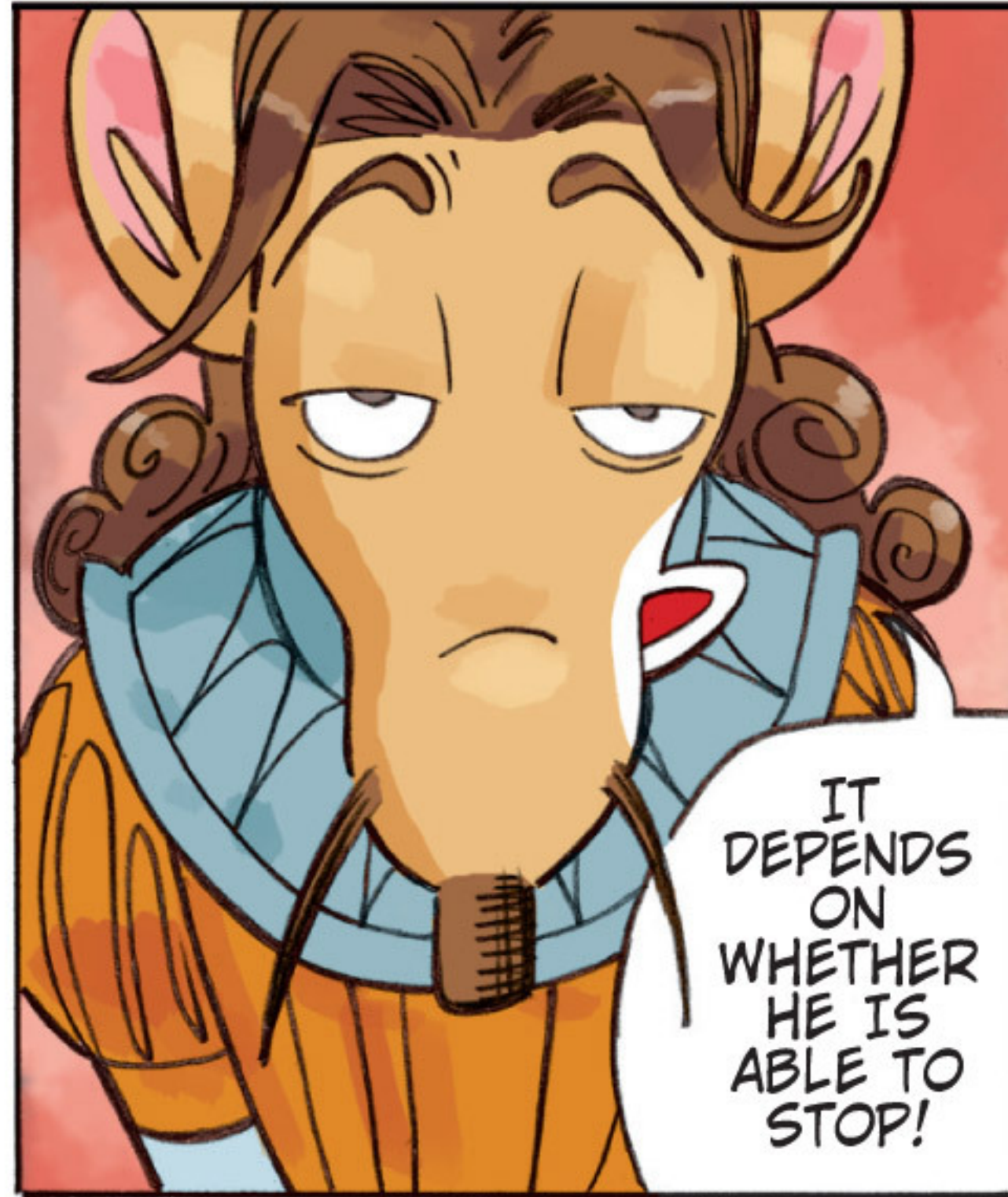
*DESTROY YOU!

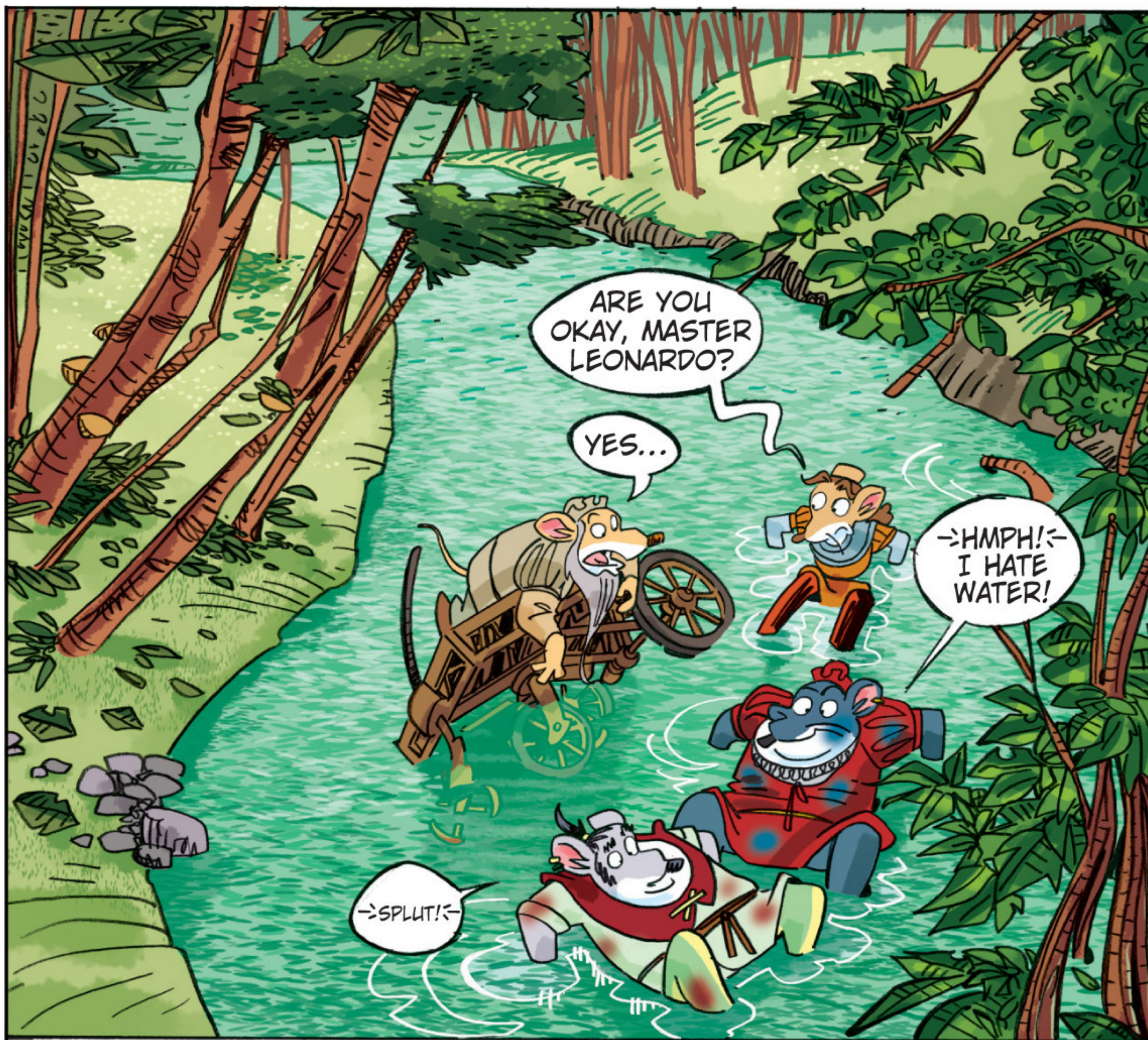
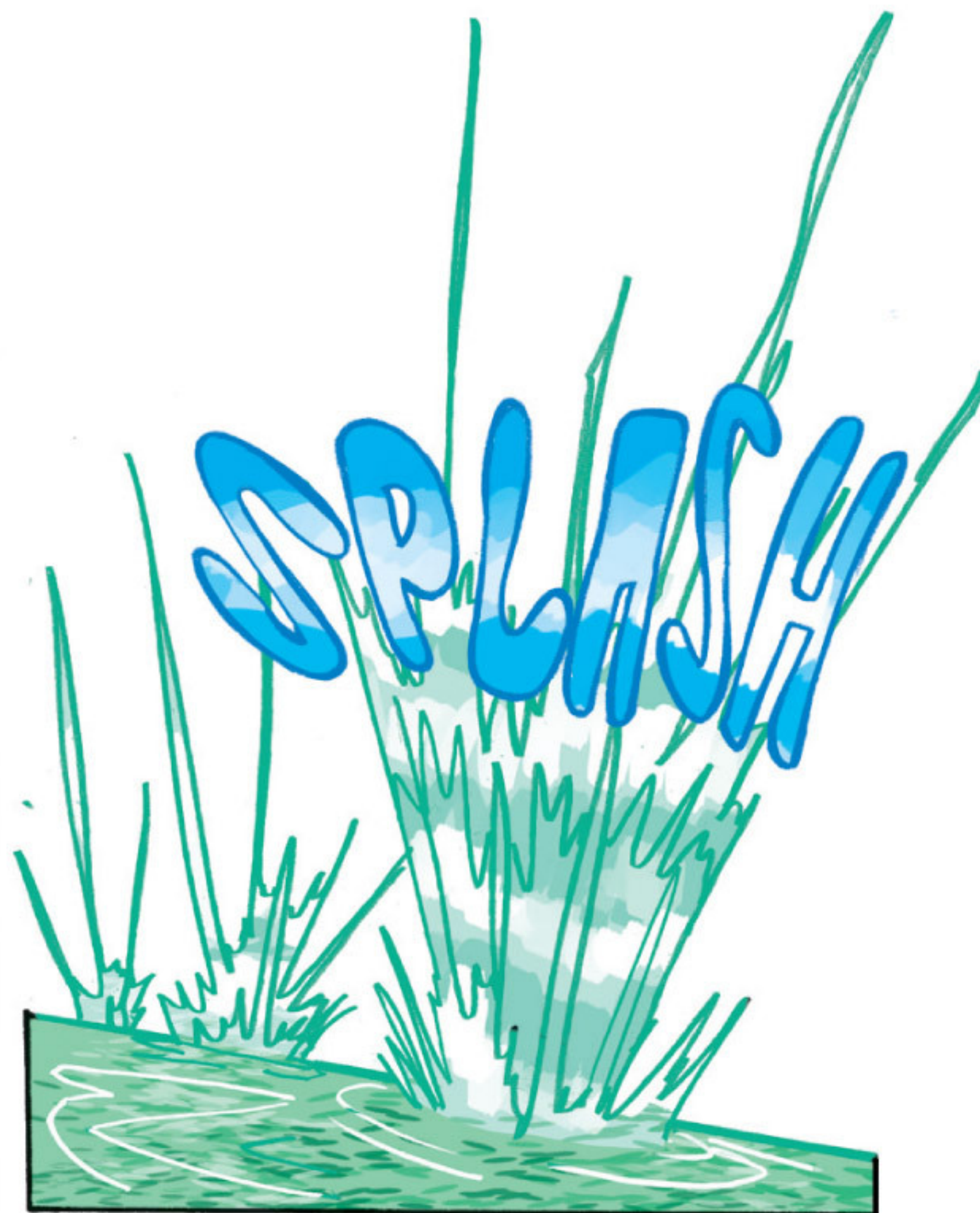
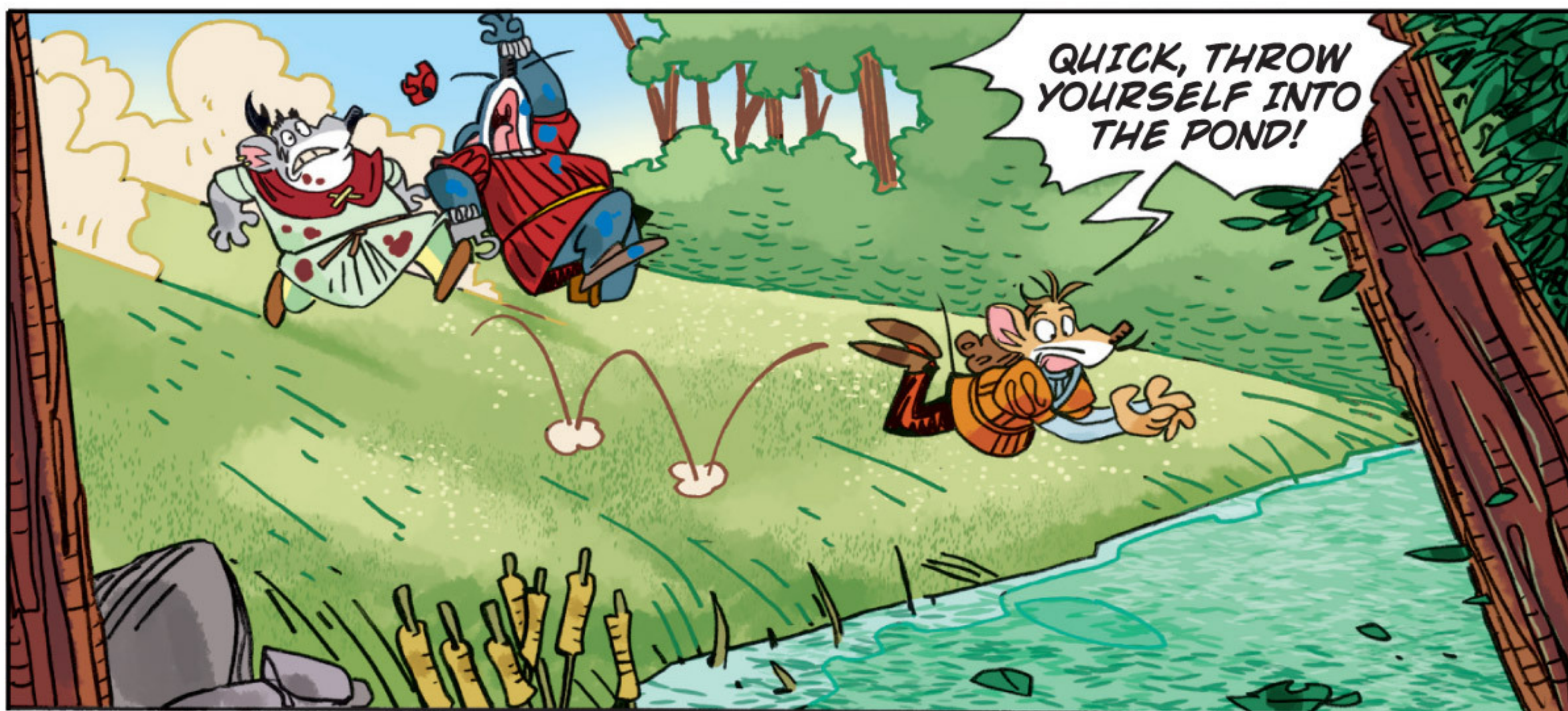


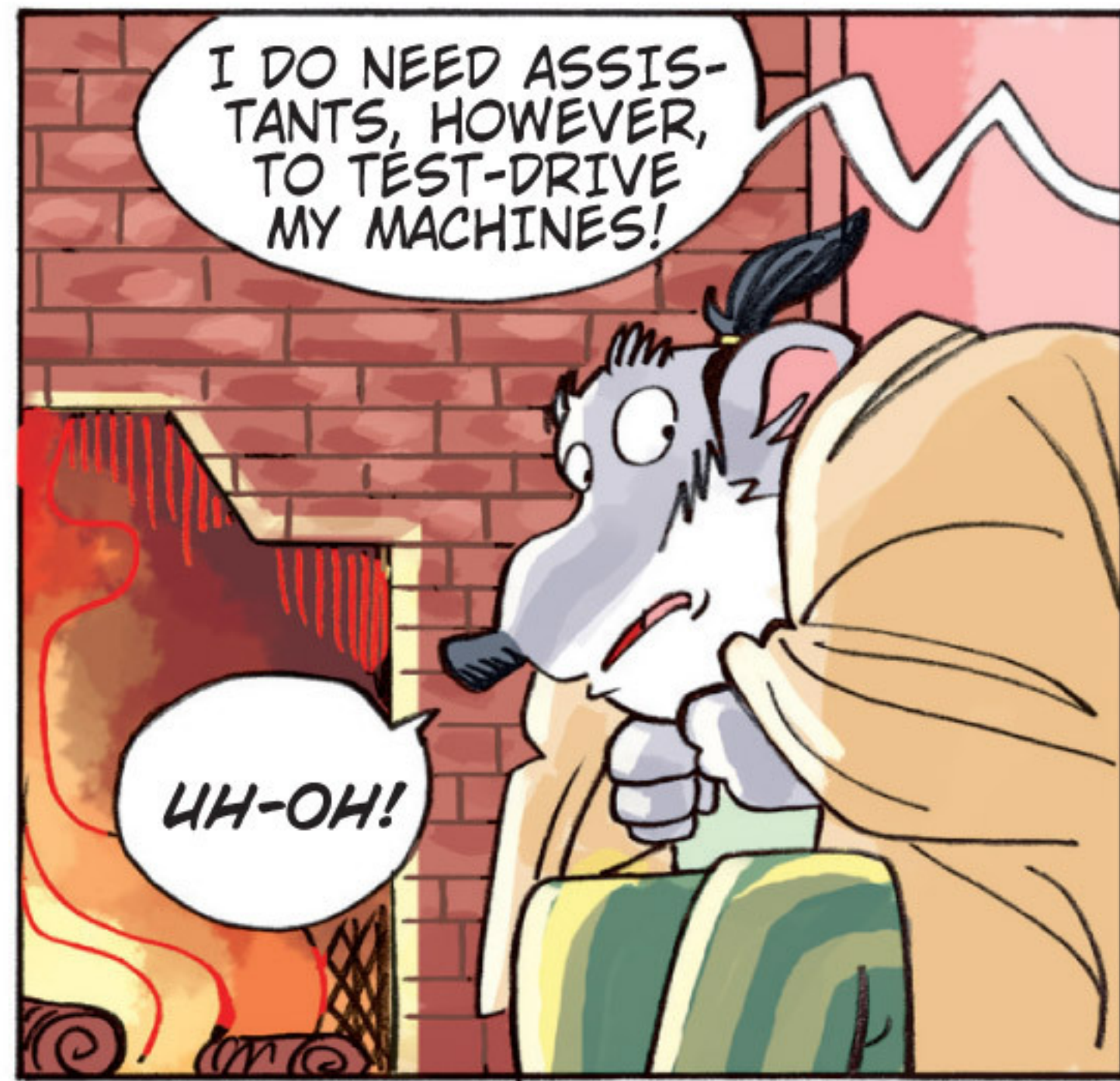
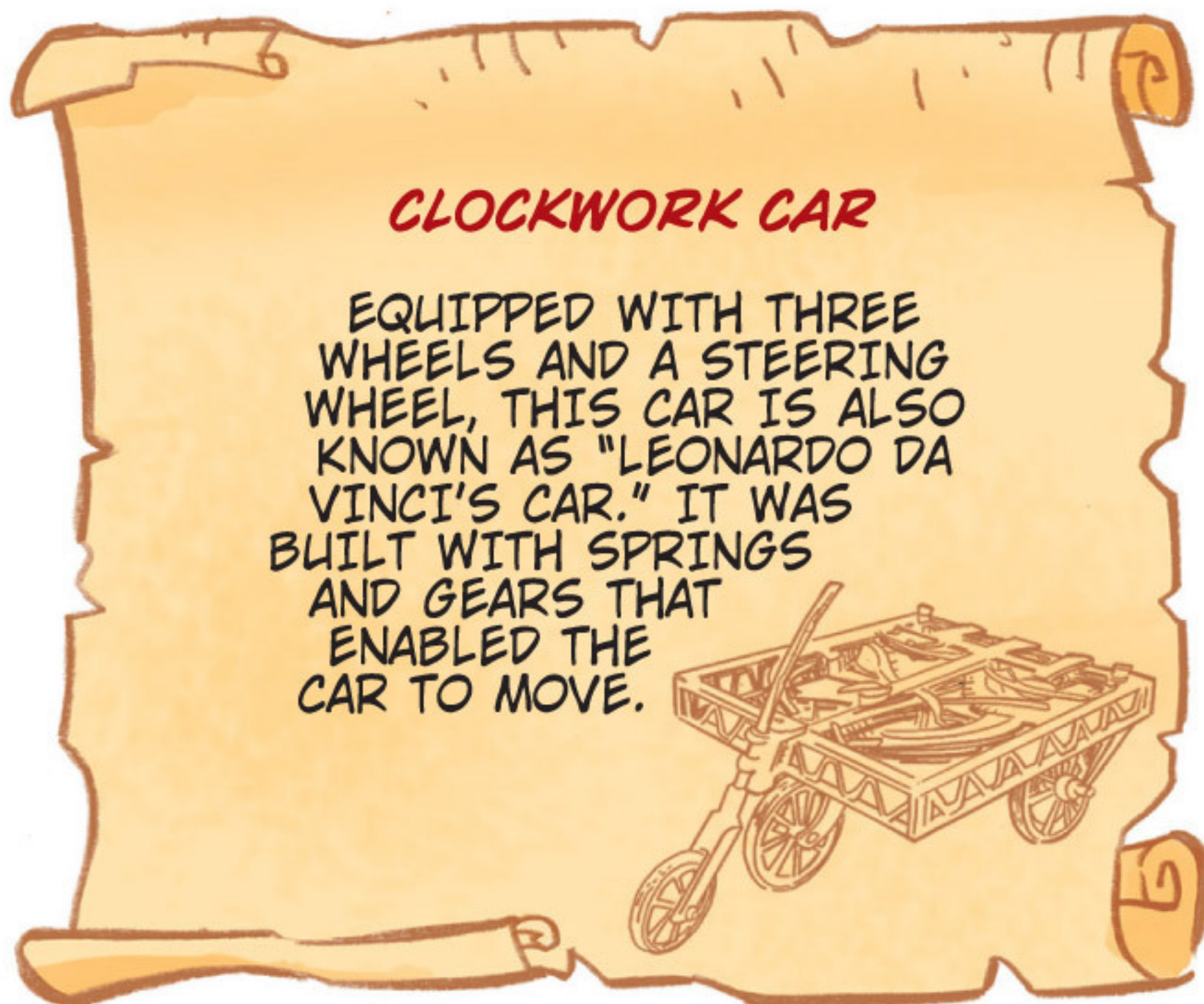
A LITTLE LATER, THE
CATS ARRIVED AT THE
CASTLE OF CLOUX.

THE CASTLE OF CLOUX
WAS LOCATED ONLY 500 METERS
FROM THE ROYAL CASTLE OF
AMBOISE. AT THE REQUEST OF
KING FRANCIS I OF FRANCE,
LEONARDO DA VINCI STAYED
THERE FROM 1517-1519, THE YEAR
HE DIED. TODAY THE CASTLE IS
CALLED CLOS LUCE AND HOUSES
A MUSEUM DEDICATED TO
THE GREAT ARTIST.

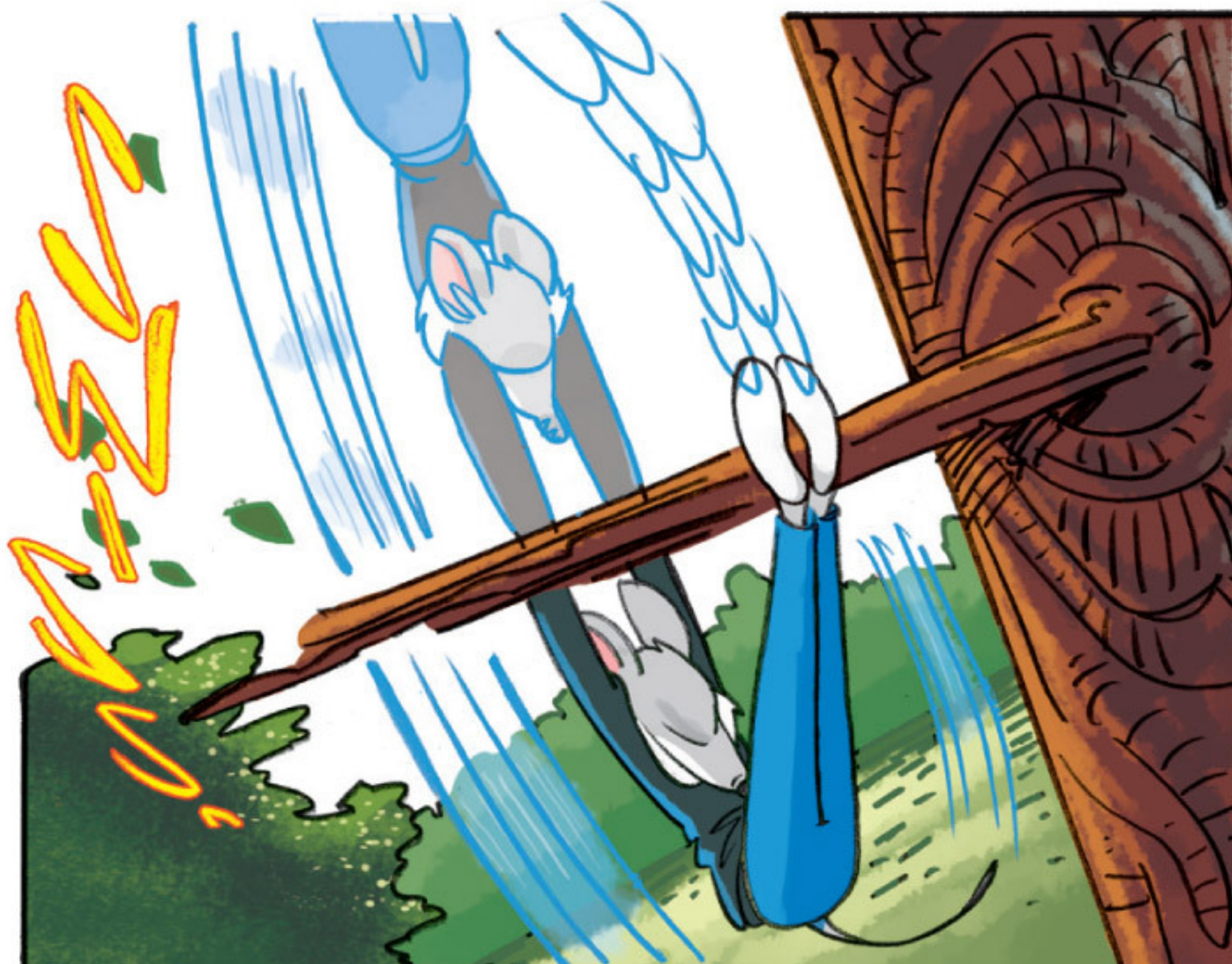
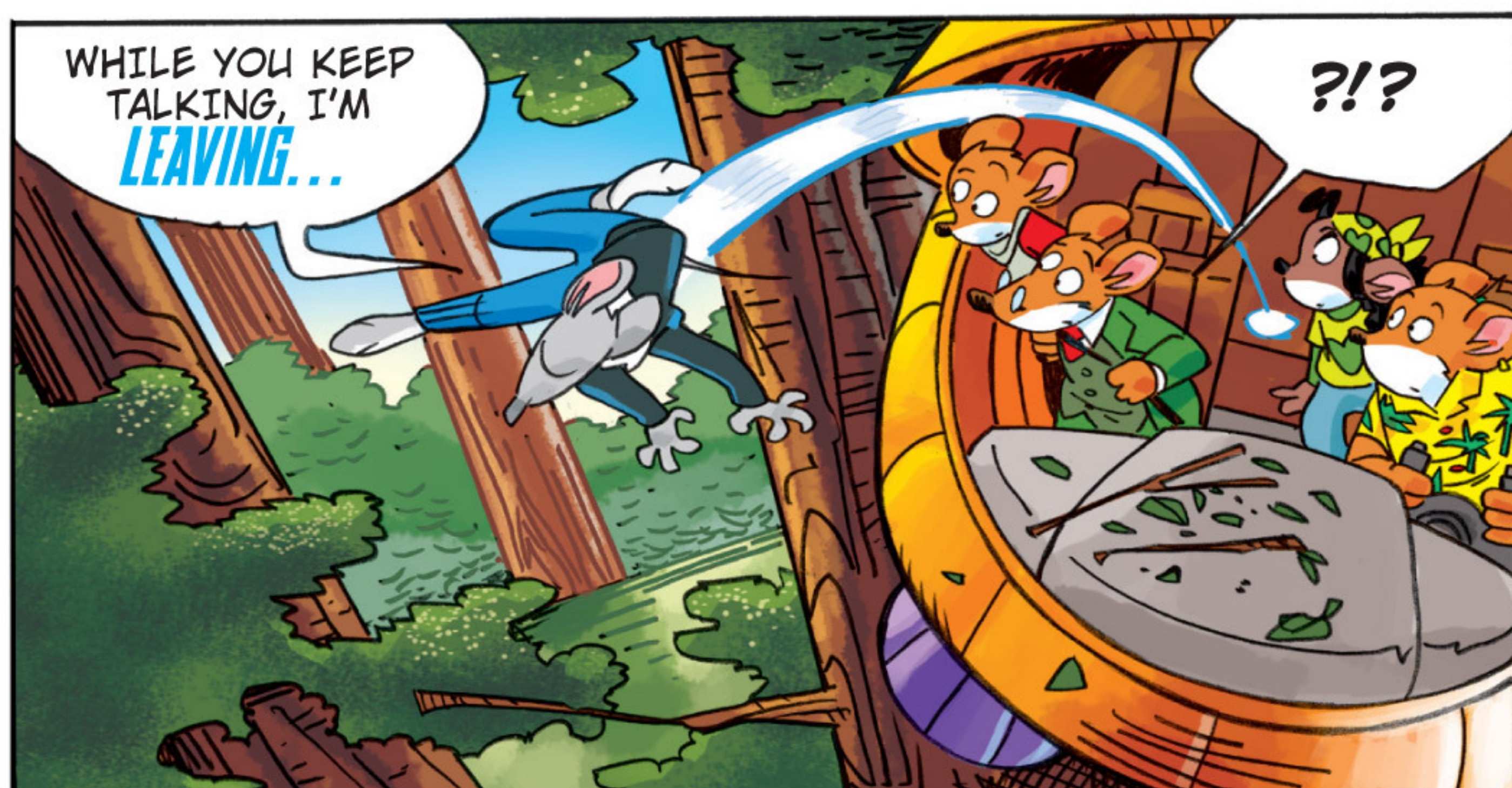
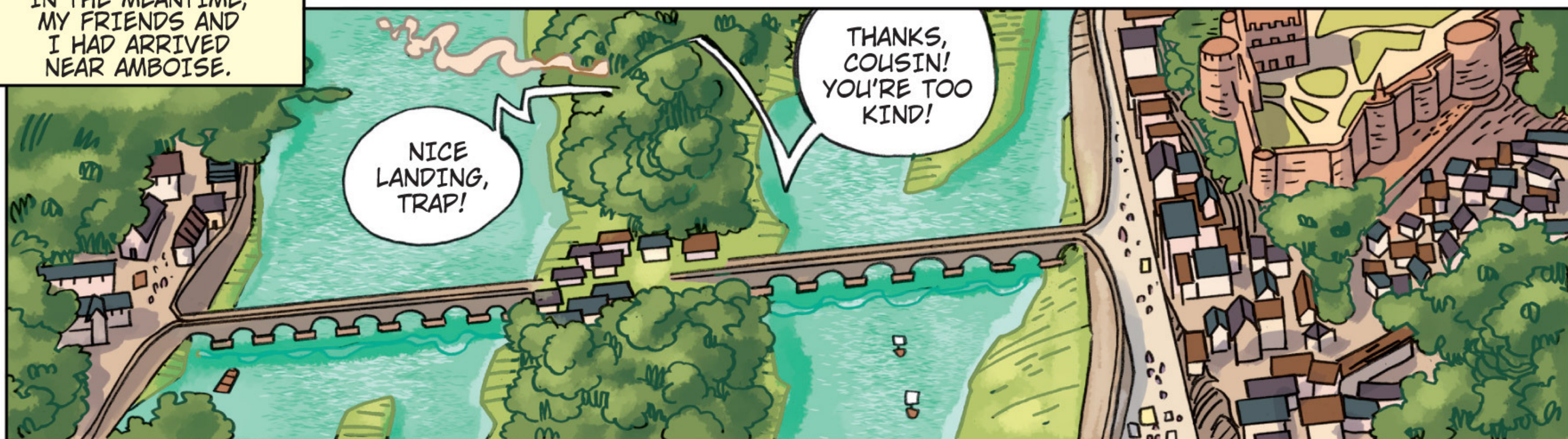


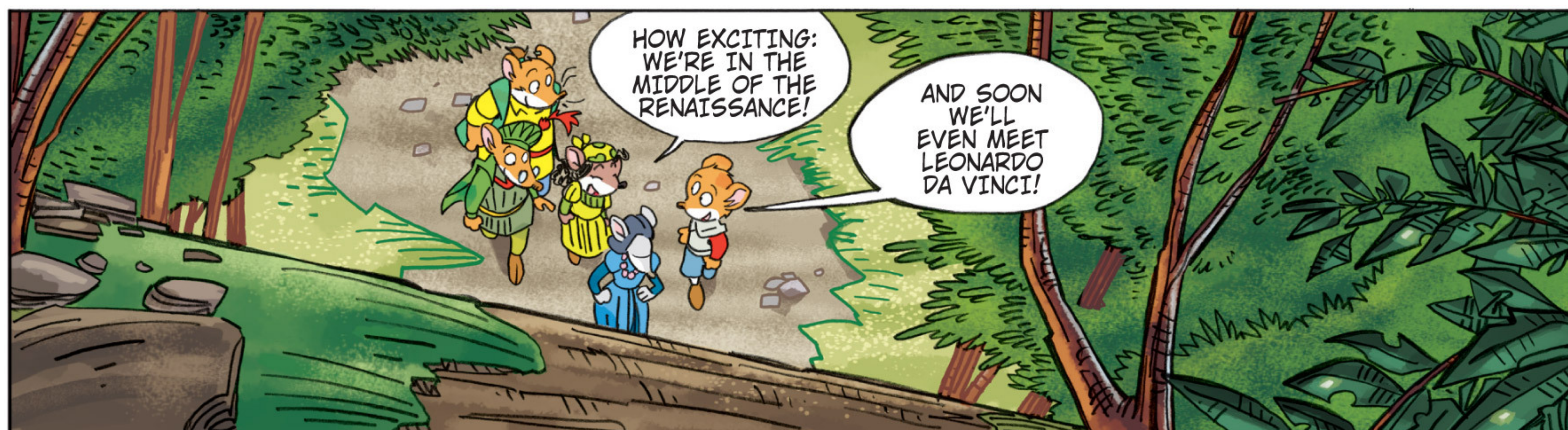
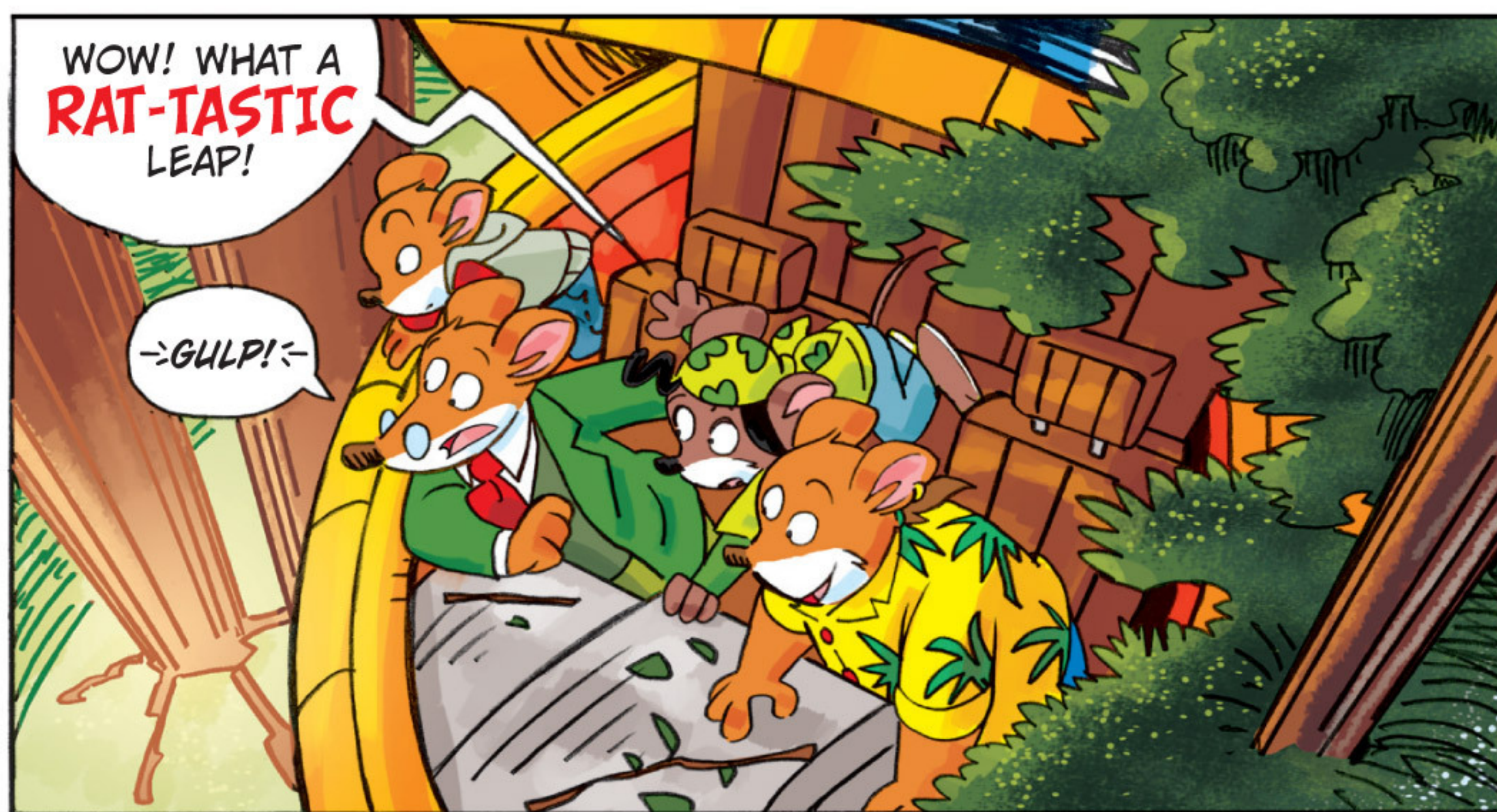
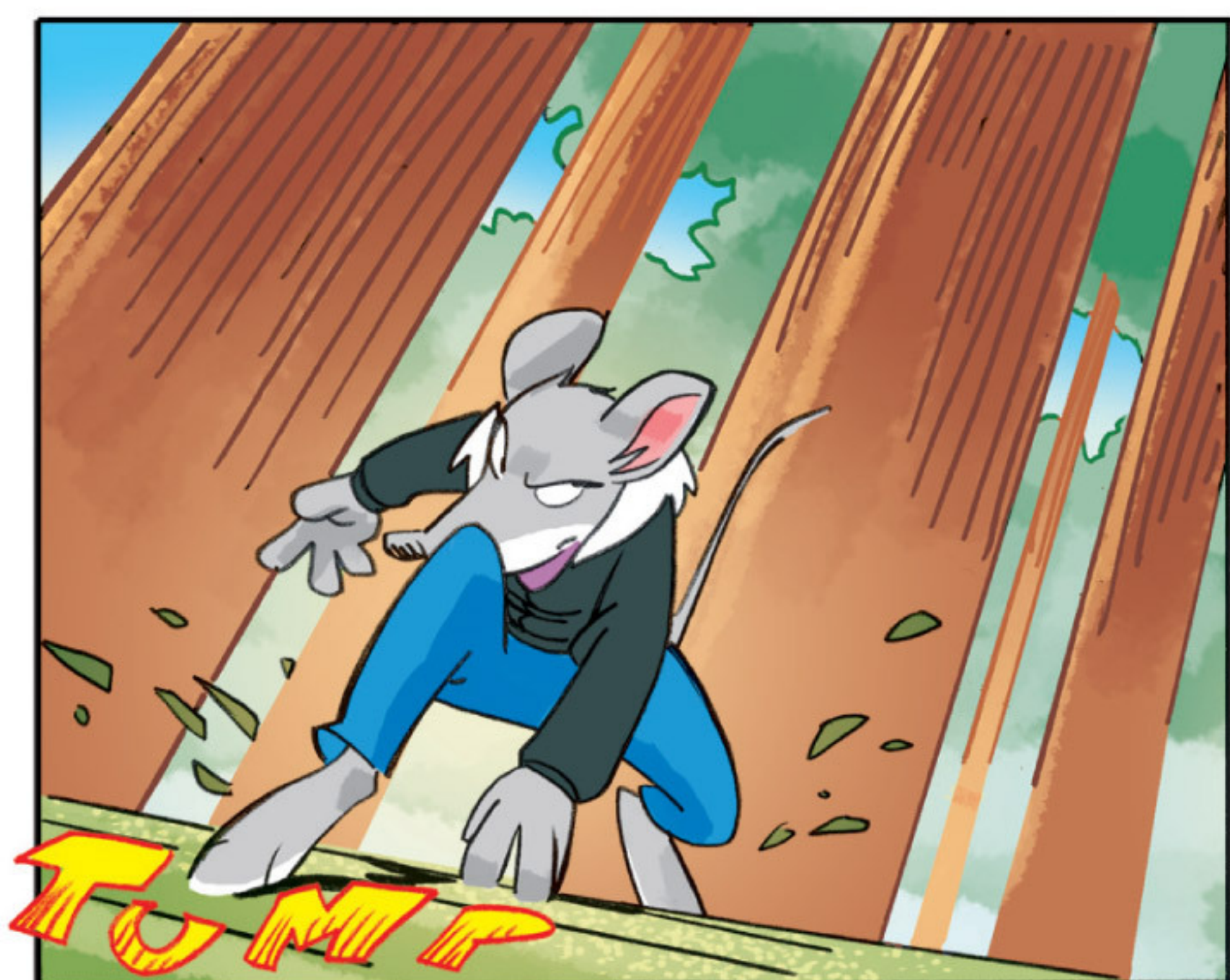


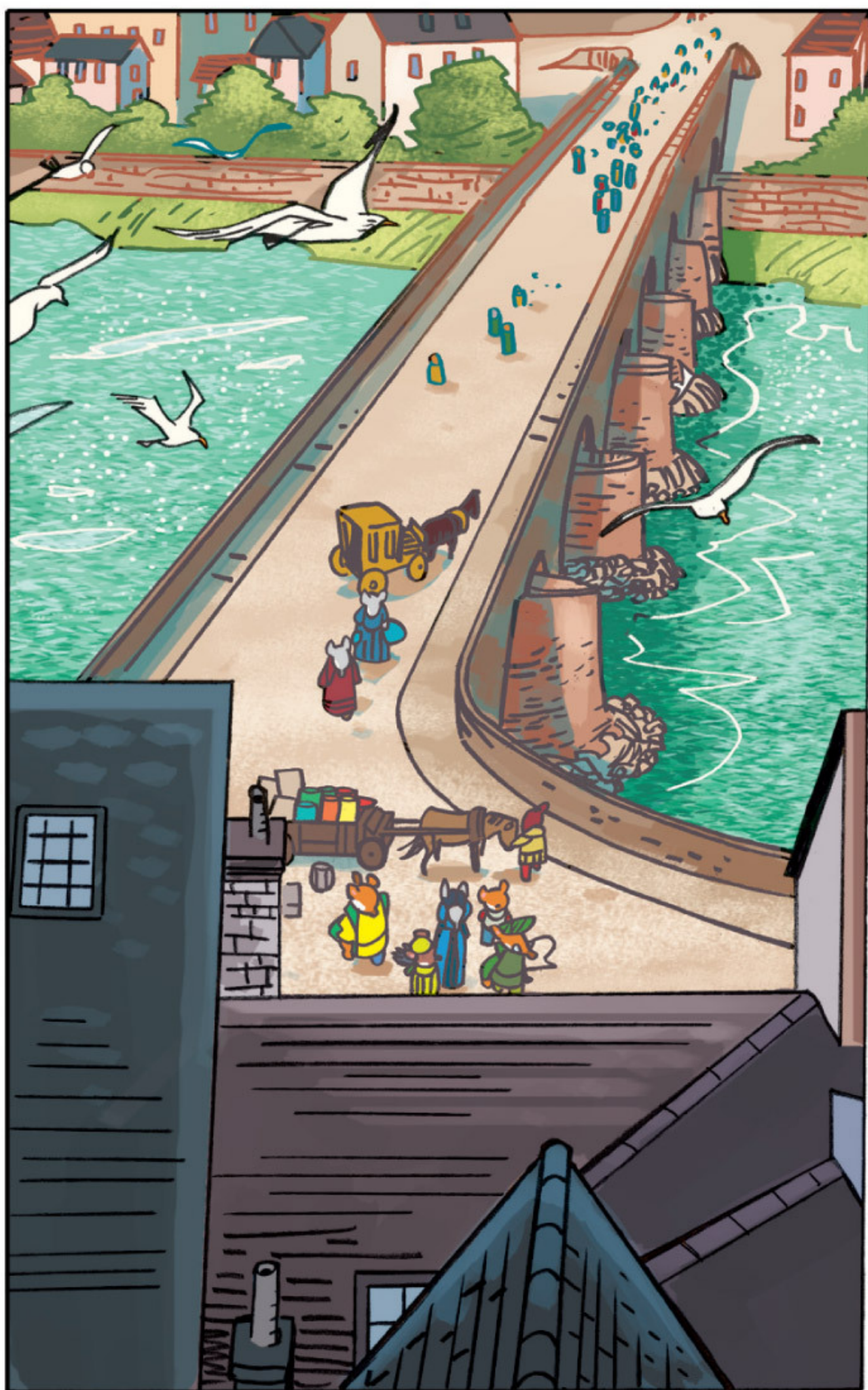




IN THE MEANTIME,
MY FRIENDS AND
I HAD ARRIVED
NEAR AMBOISE.





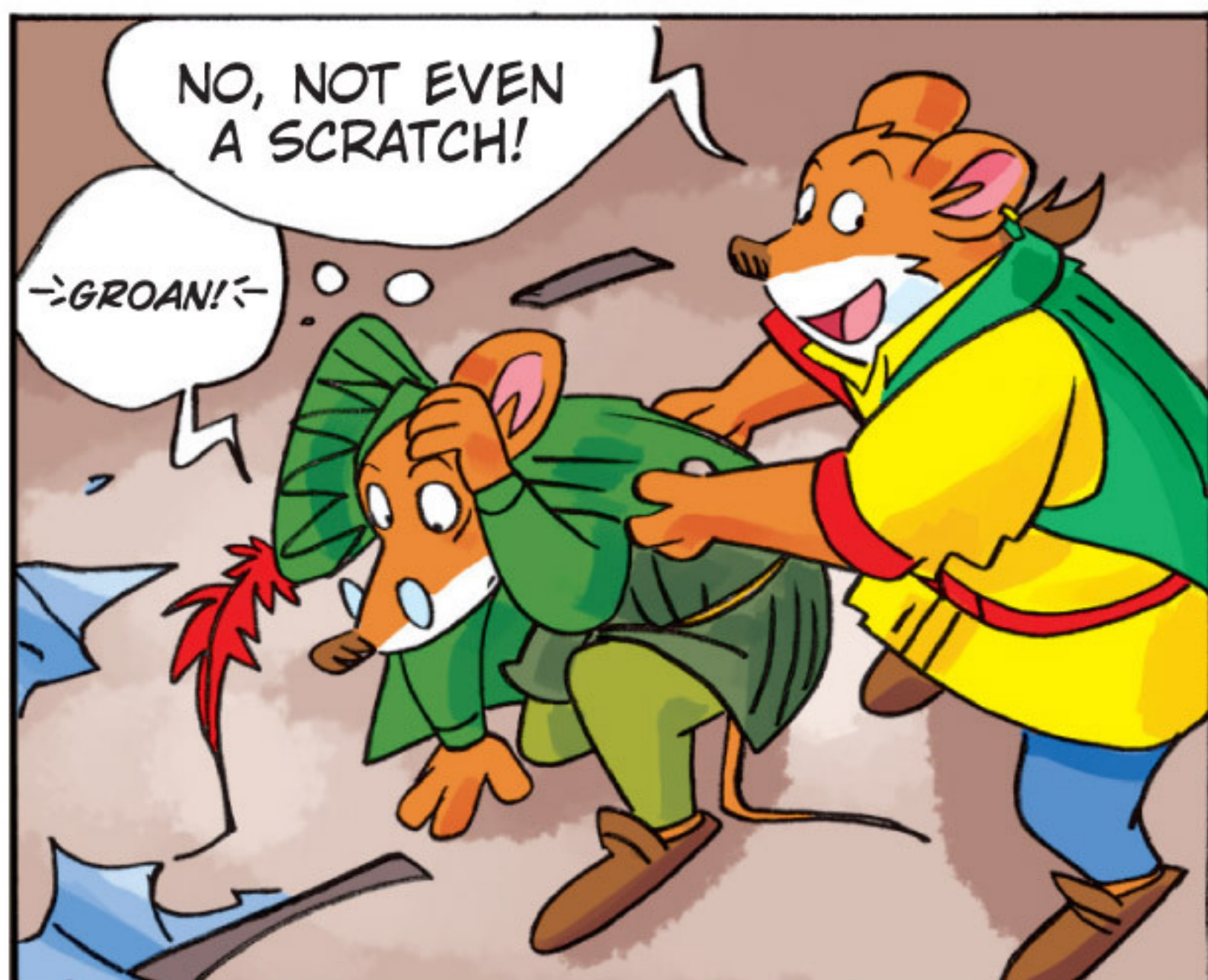
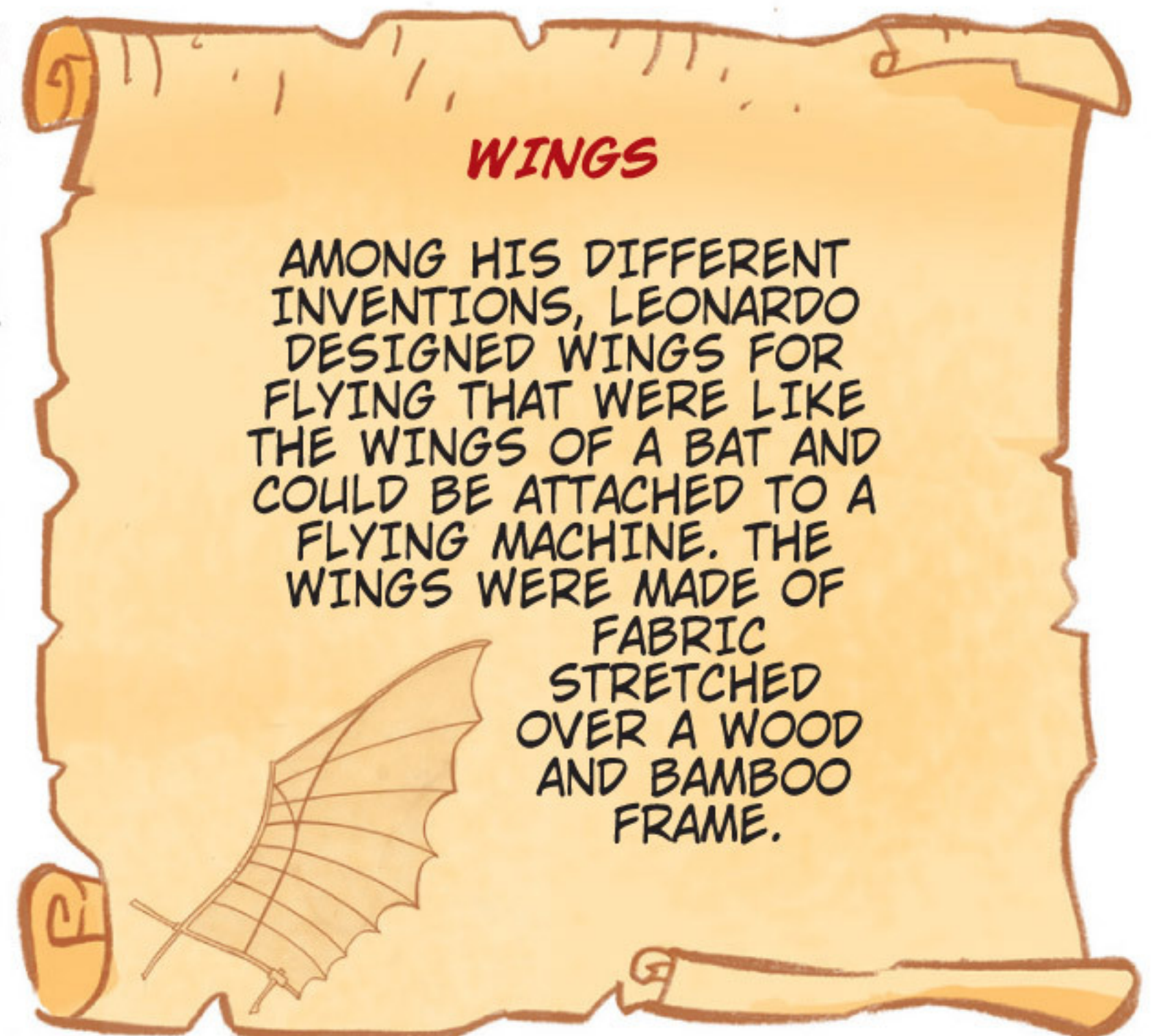
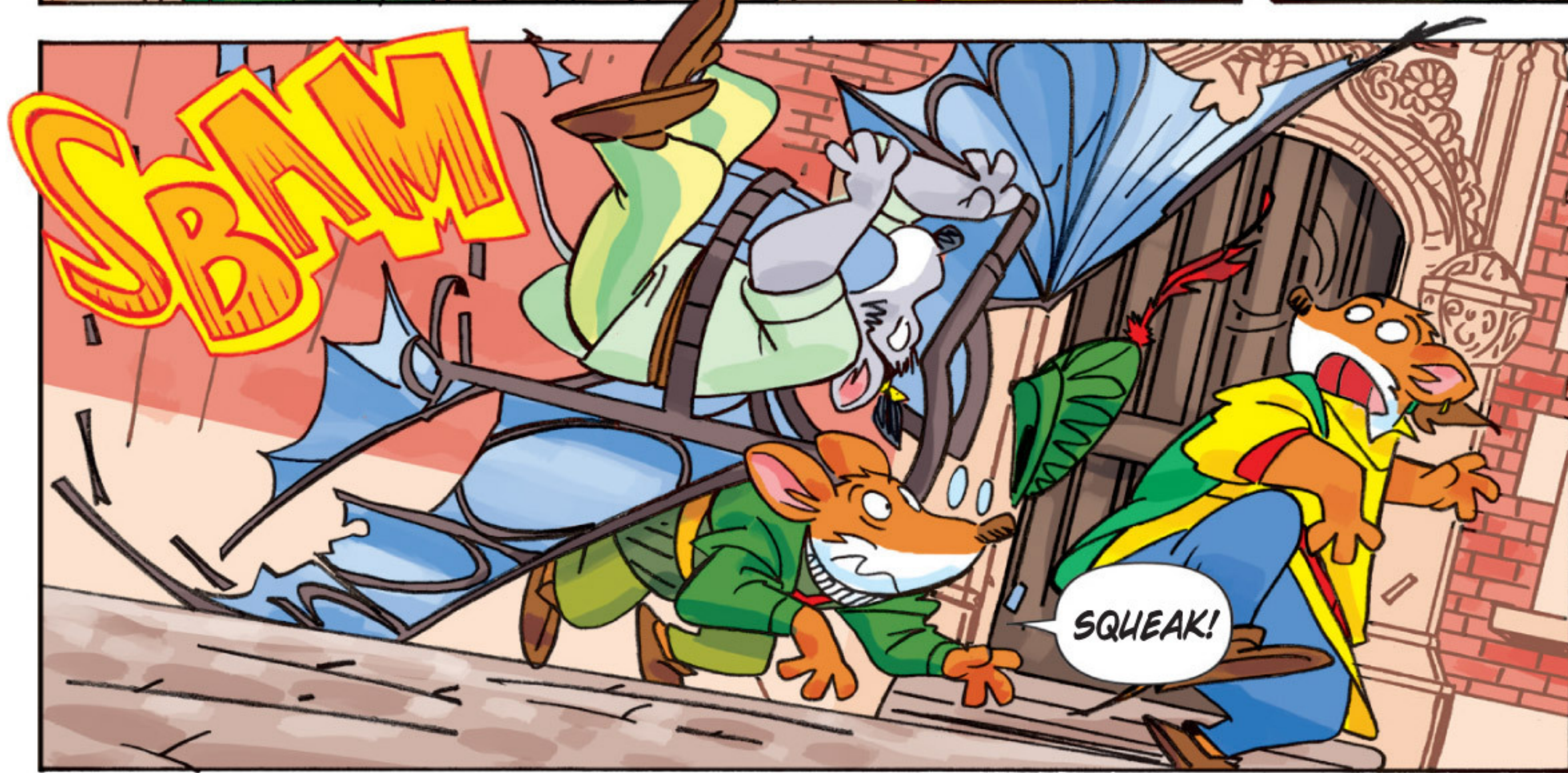


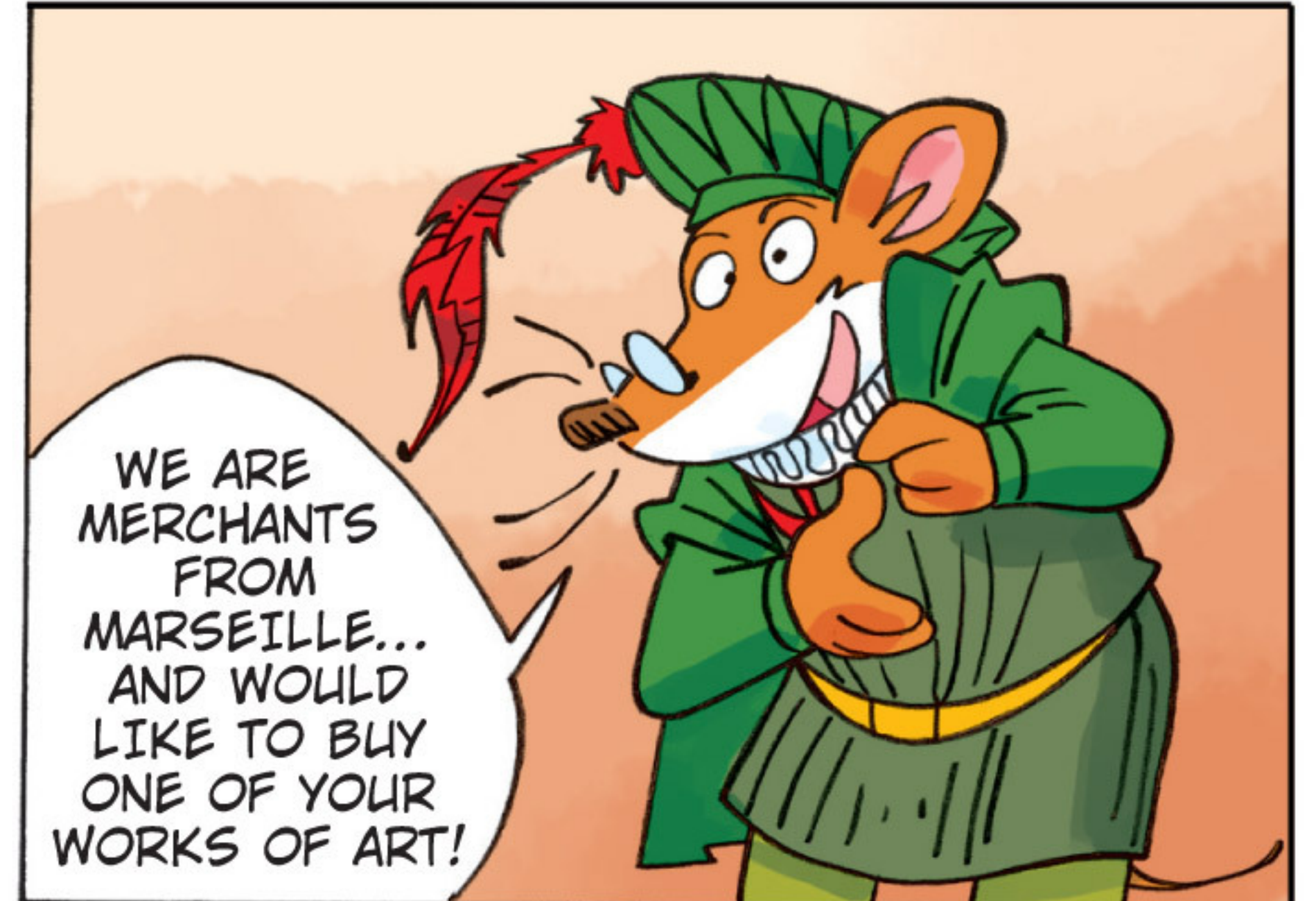
AMBOISE CASTLE

WAS BUILT IN THE 13TH CENTURY ON A BLUFF OVERLOOKING THE LOIRE RIVER IN CENTRAL FRANCE. IN THE FOLLOWING CENTURIES, LARGE GARDENS AND WIDE TERRACES WERE CREATED HANGING OVER THE RIVER. KING FRANCIS I OF FRANCE USED AMBOISE CASTLE AS HIS HOME WHEN HE STAYED IN THE LOIRE VALLEY.

SOON, WE REACHED THE CASTLE OF CLOUX...



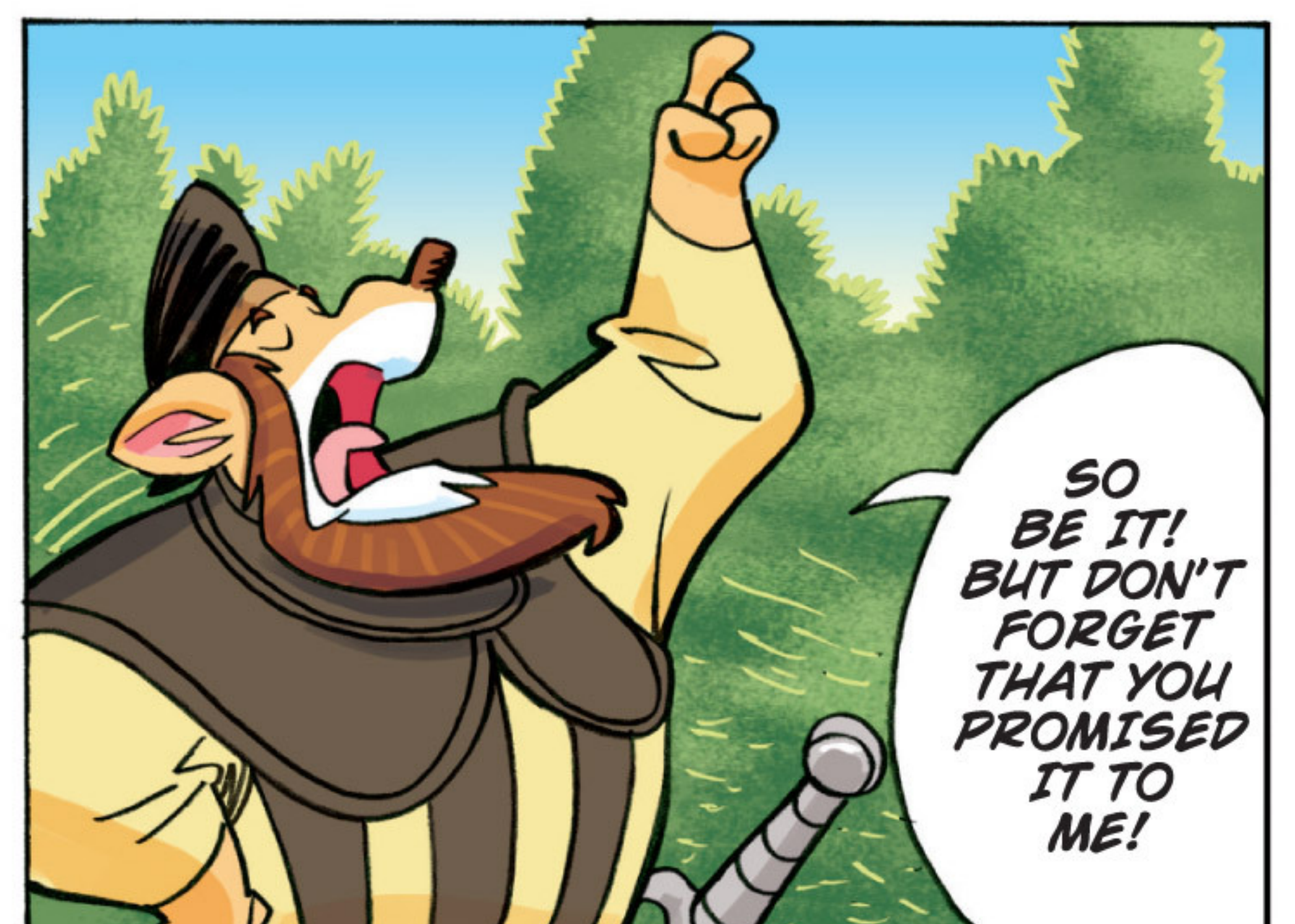
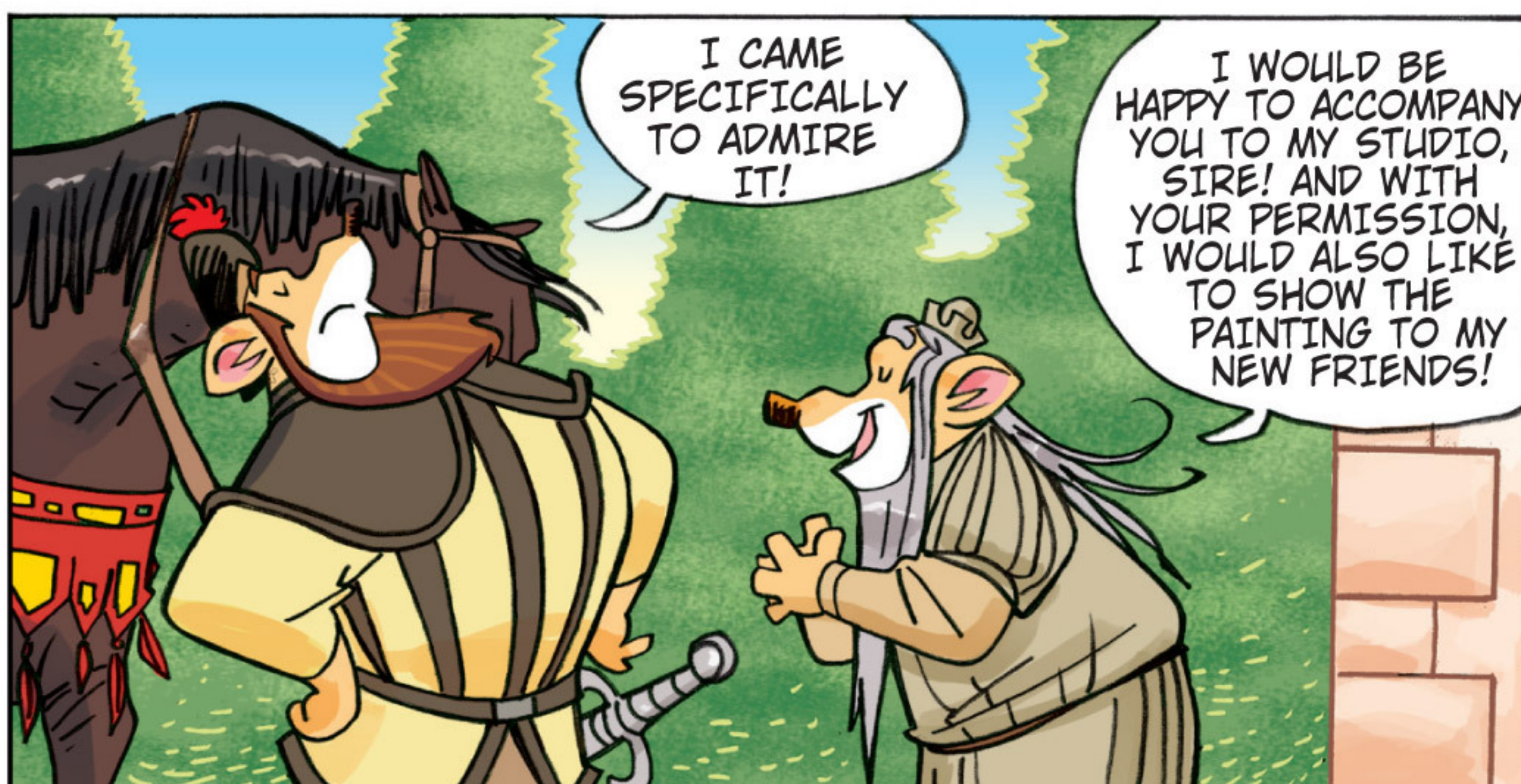
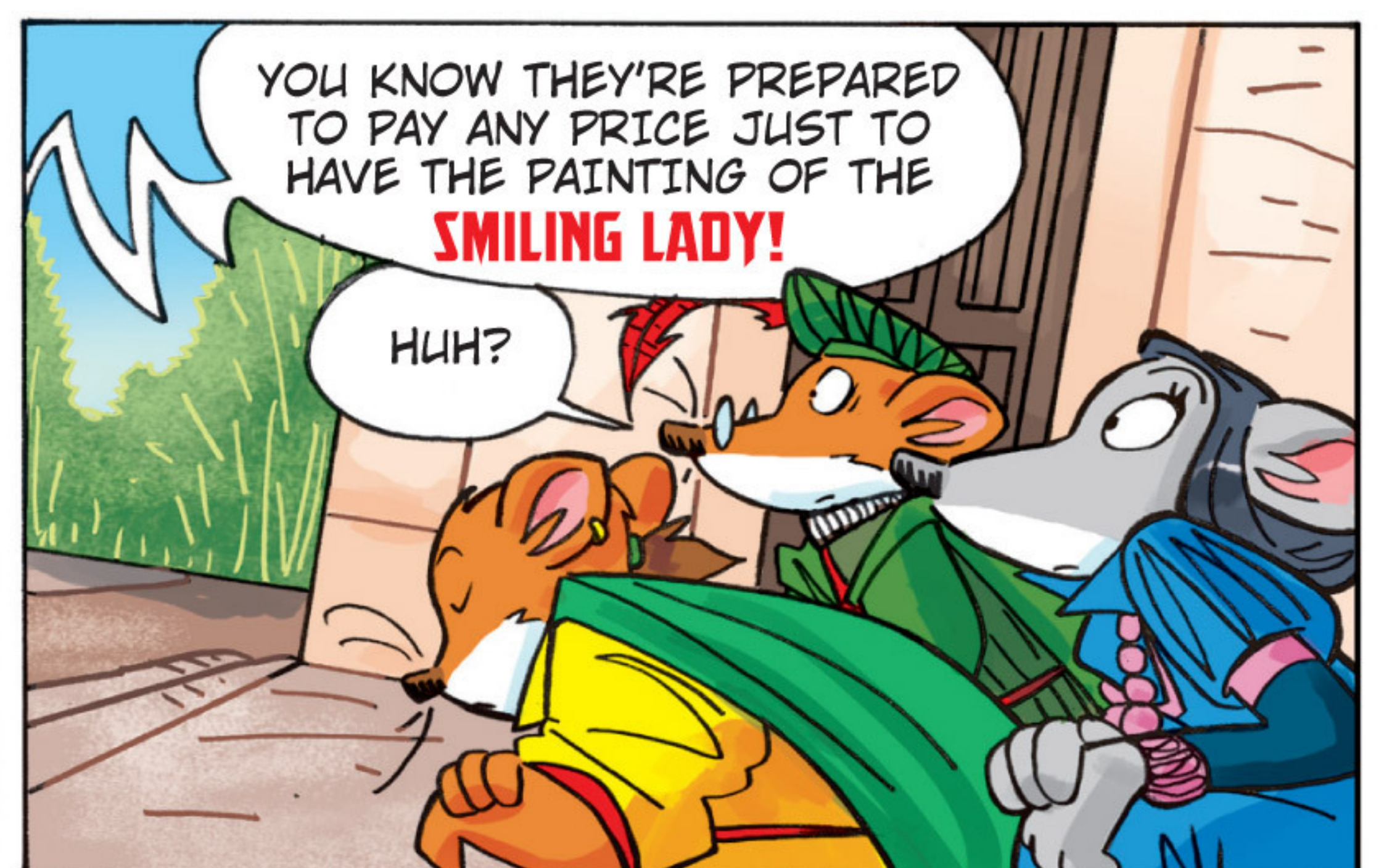
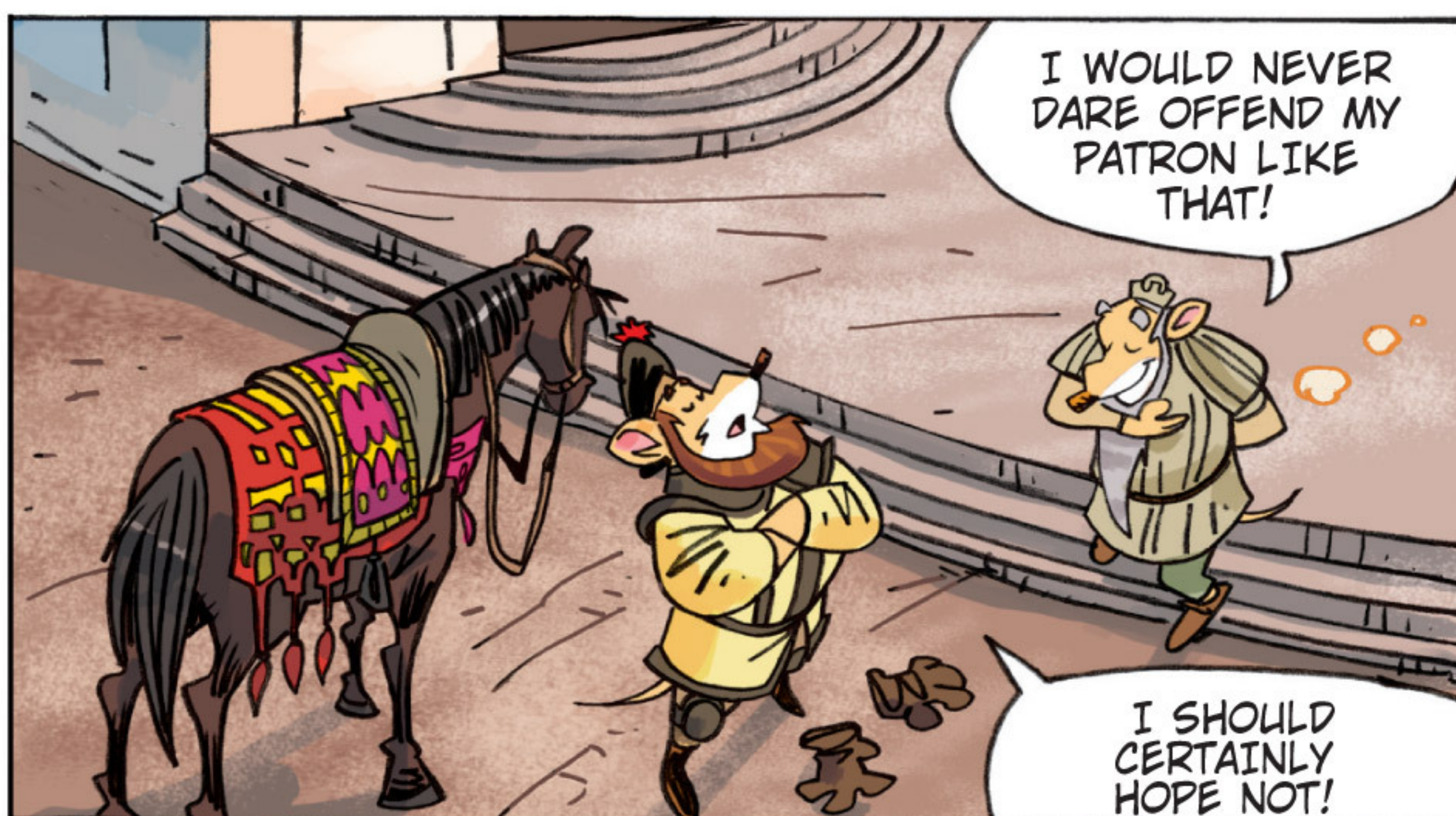






FRANCIS I (1494-1547)

WAS BORN IN COGNAC, FRANCE IN 1494. IN 1514 HE WAS GRANTED THE TITLE OF DUKE OF VALOIS AND MARRIED CLAUDIA, DAUGHTER OF KING LOUIS XII OF FRANCE, BECOMING HIS LEGITIMATE SUCCESSOR. ONCE HE ASCENDED TO THE THRONE, FRANCIS I FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON FOREIGN POLICY, BUT HE NEVER LET THAT END HIS PASSION FOR THE ARTS AND LITERATURE. MANY ITALIAN POETS AND ARTISTS BESIDES LEONARDO LIVED AT THE COURT OF THE KING.





SEVERAL
MINUTES LATER...

HERE'S THE
PAINTING!

IT'S JUST AS
I IMAGINED...
IT'S THE
**MONA
LISA!**

IT'S...
IT'S...
MAGNIFI-
CENT!

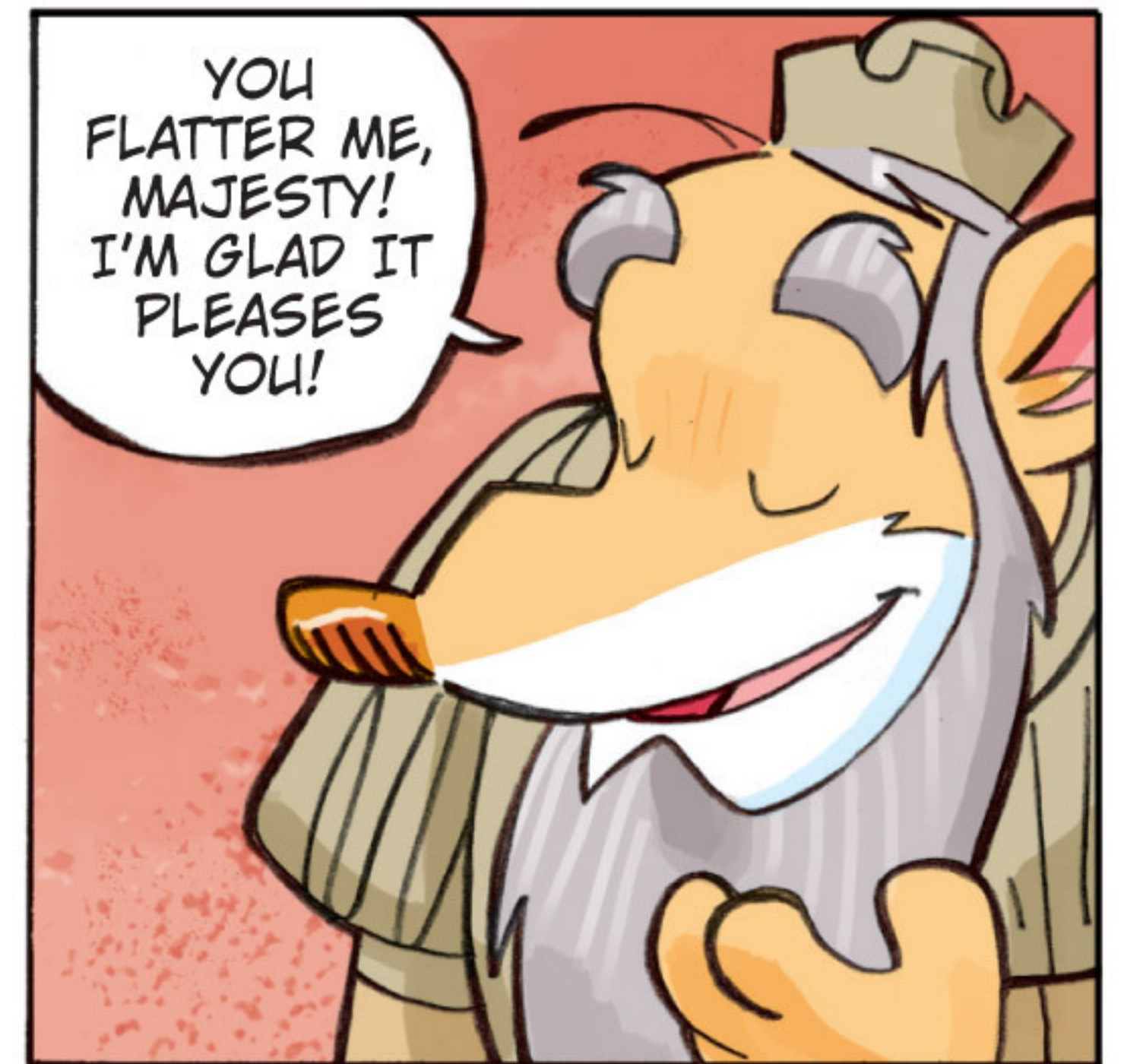
YES, YES,
IT'S TRULY
MAGNIFICENT,
BUT IT'S
MINE!

LA GIOCONDA

LA GIOCONDA, ALSO CALLED THE "MONA LISA," IS LEONARDO DA VINCI'S MOST FAMOUS PAINTING. HE PAINTED IT BETWEEN 1503 AND 1506 ON A PLANK OF POPLAR WOOD, USING OIL PAINTS. WE STILL AREN'T CERTAIN ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF THE WOMAN HE PAINTED. ACCORDING TO SOME SCHOLARS, SHE WAS MONA LISA GHERARDINI, THE WIFE OF FRANCESCO BARTOLOMEO DEL GIOCONDO (WHOSE NAME WAS USED FOR THE PAINTING). THE PAINTING WAS MADE IN FLORENCE AND AFTERWARDS LEONARDO TOOK IT WITH HIM WHEREVER HE LIVED.



YOU'VE SURPASSED YOURSELF WITH THIS PAINTING!



YOU FLATTER ME, MAJESTY! I'M GLAD IT PLEASES YOU!



I'M STAYING HERE TO CONTEMPLATE THE PAINTING! YOU GO ON AHEAD!



YES, MASTER LEONARDO, LET US SEE ALL YOUR WORKS OF ART... WE'RE HERE JUST FOR THAT REASON!

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I PROMISED MY ASSISTANTS...

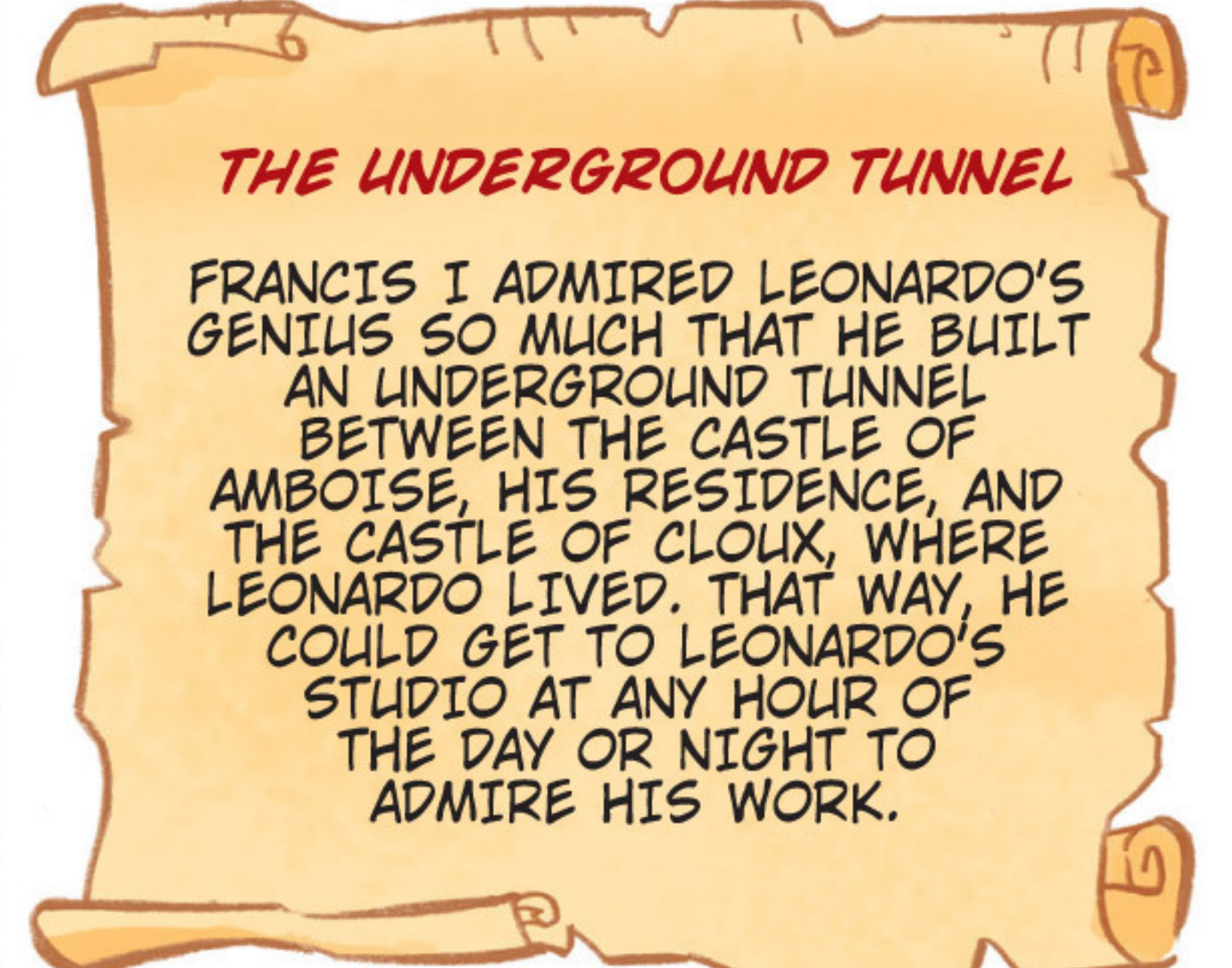


DON'T WORRY ABOUT US, **MASTER**, YOUR GUESTS ARE MORE IMPORTANT!

ESPECIALLY AFTER THE THRILL OF FLYING... WE DESERVE A NICE CATNAP!



OH, JUST SO YOU KNOW, I'LL LEAVE THROUGH THE TUNNEL THAT CONNECTS OUR TWO CASTLES!



THE UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

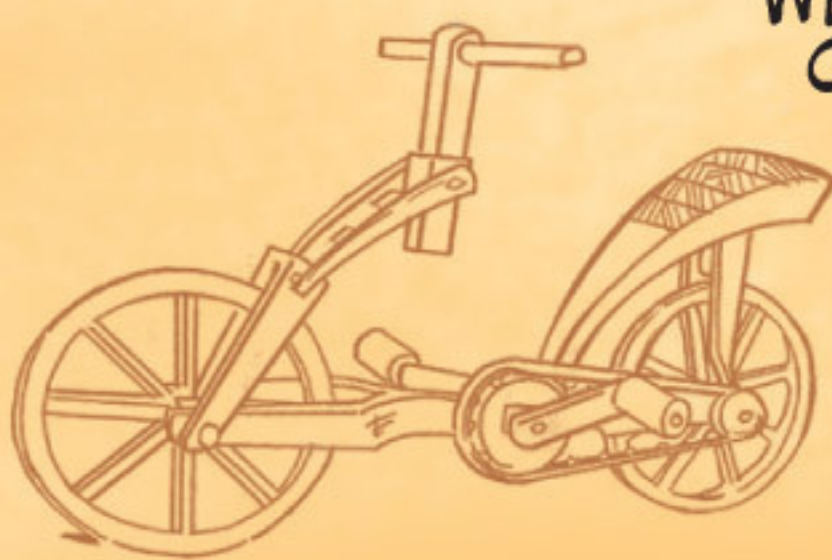
FRANCIS I ADMIRERD LEONARDO'S GENIUS SO MUCH THAT HE BUILT AN UNDERGROUND TUNNEL BETWEEN THE CASTLE OF AMBOISE, HIS RESIDENCE, AND THE CASTLE OF CLOUX, WHERE LEONARDO LIVED. THAT WAY, HE COULD GET TO LEONARDO'S STUDIO AT ANY HOUR OF THE DAY OR NIGHT TO ADMIRE HIS WORK.

LATER, AFTER
SHOWING US
ALL HIS WORK,
LEONARDO WENT
BACK TO HIS
EXPERIMENTS...

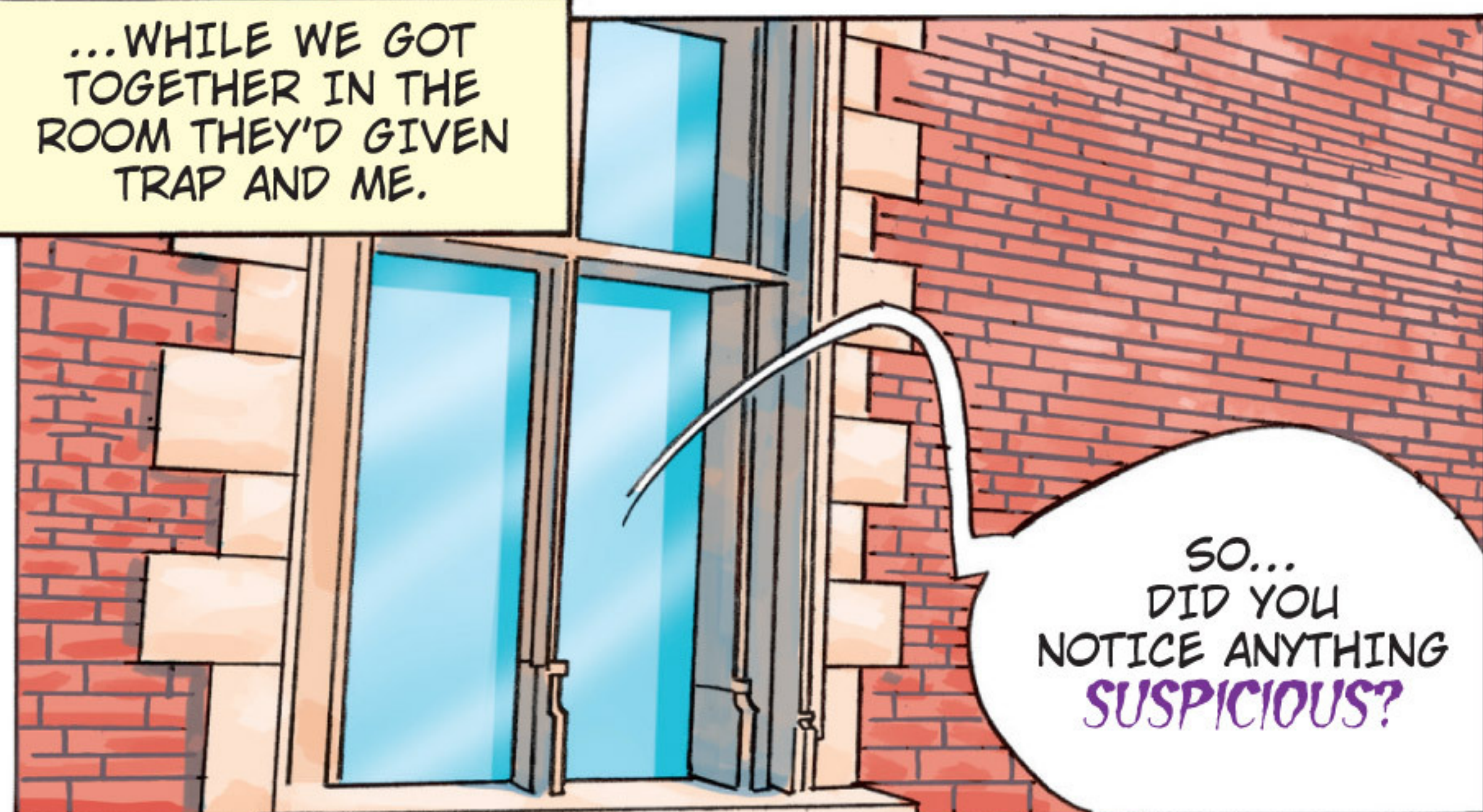


LEONARDO'S BICYCLE

LEONARDO HAS ALSO BEEN CREDITED
WITH DESIGNING THE FIRST MODEL OF
A BICYCLE (BUT NOW HISTORIANS SEEM
DOUBTFUL). THE WHEELS AND FRAME
WERE ENTIRELY MADE
OF WOOD. THE FIRST
MODERN BICYCLE
WAS BUILT
IN 1880.



...WHILE WE GOT
TOGETHER IN THE
ROOM THEY'D GIVEN
TRAP AND ME.



SO...
DID YOU
NOTICE ANYTHING
SUSPICIOUS?



YES,
SOMETHING IS
STRANGE ABOUT
HIS TWO
ASSISTANTS.

IN FACT,
THEY'RE A
LITTLE
WEIRD!

BUT THAT'S
NOT PROOF
THEY'RE
CATS.

WHAT IF
LEONARDO
ISN'T THE
CAT'S REAL
TARGET?

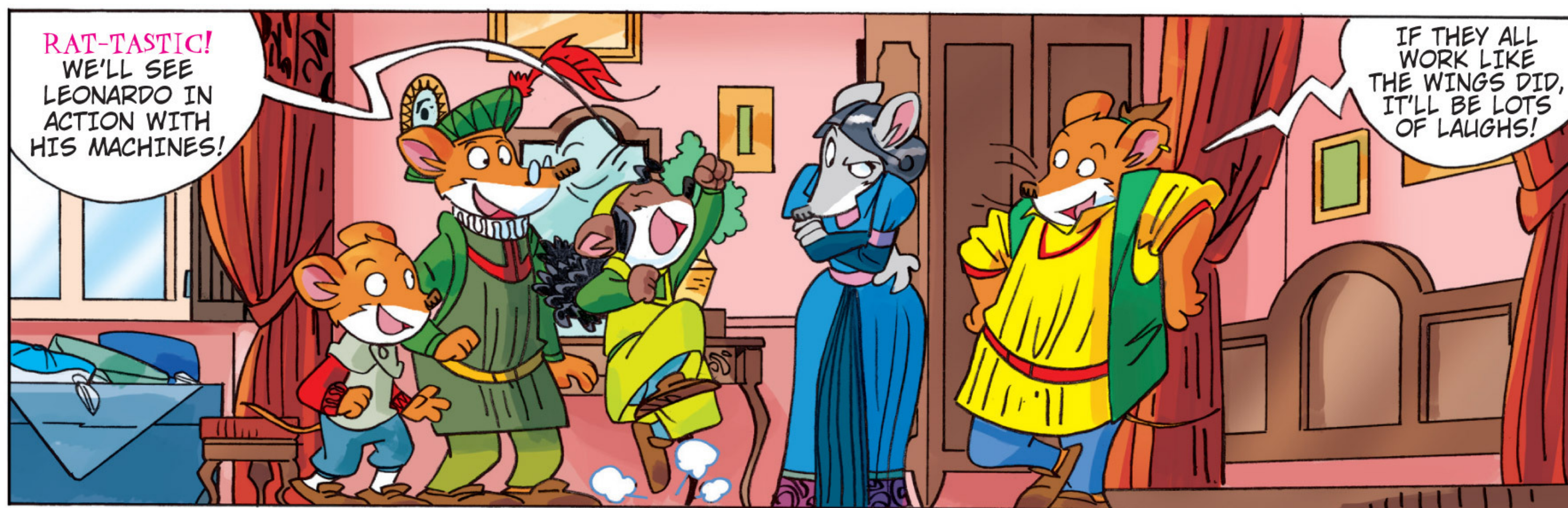
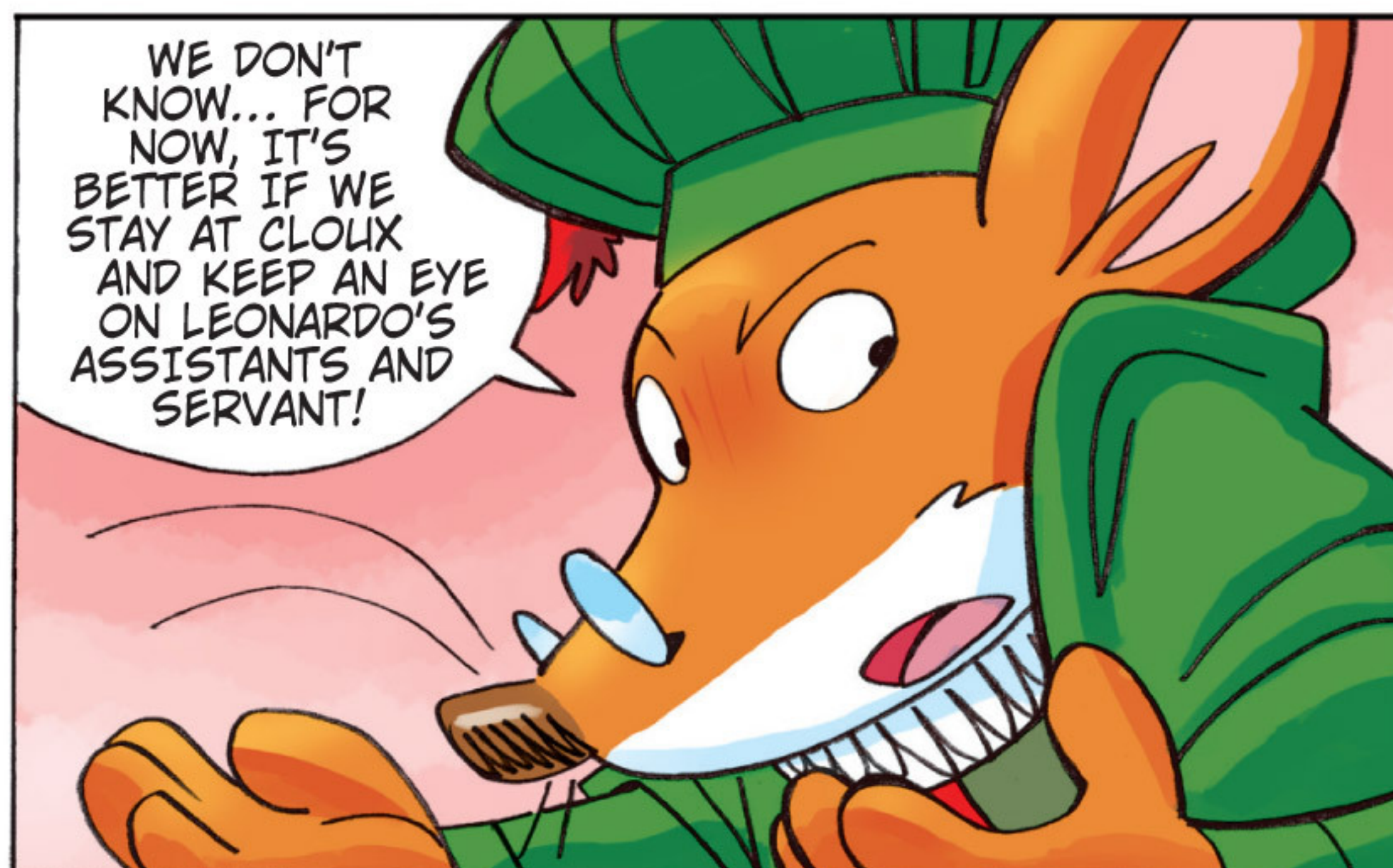
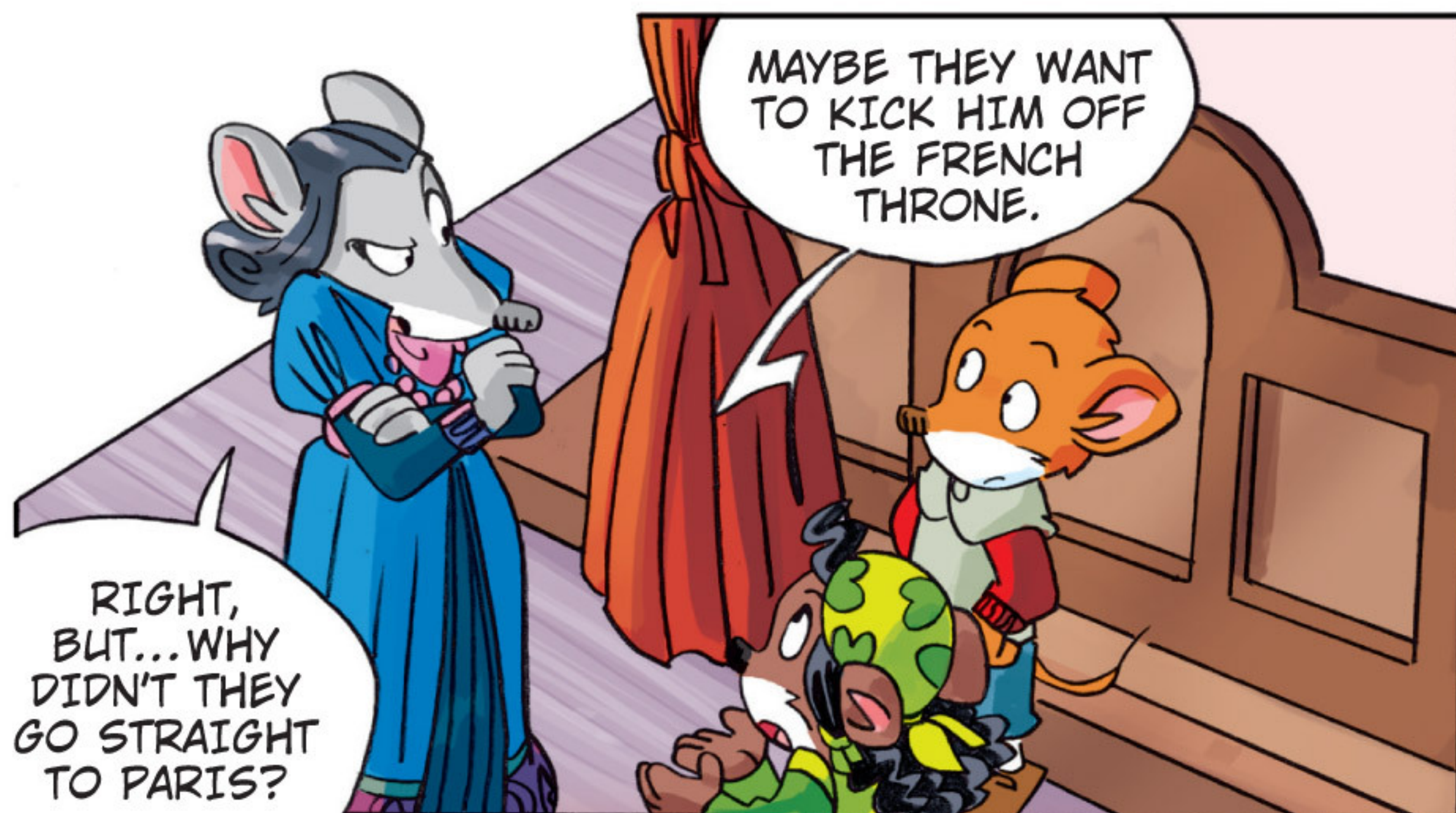


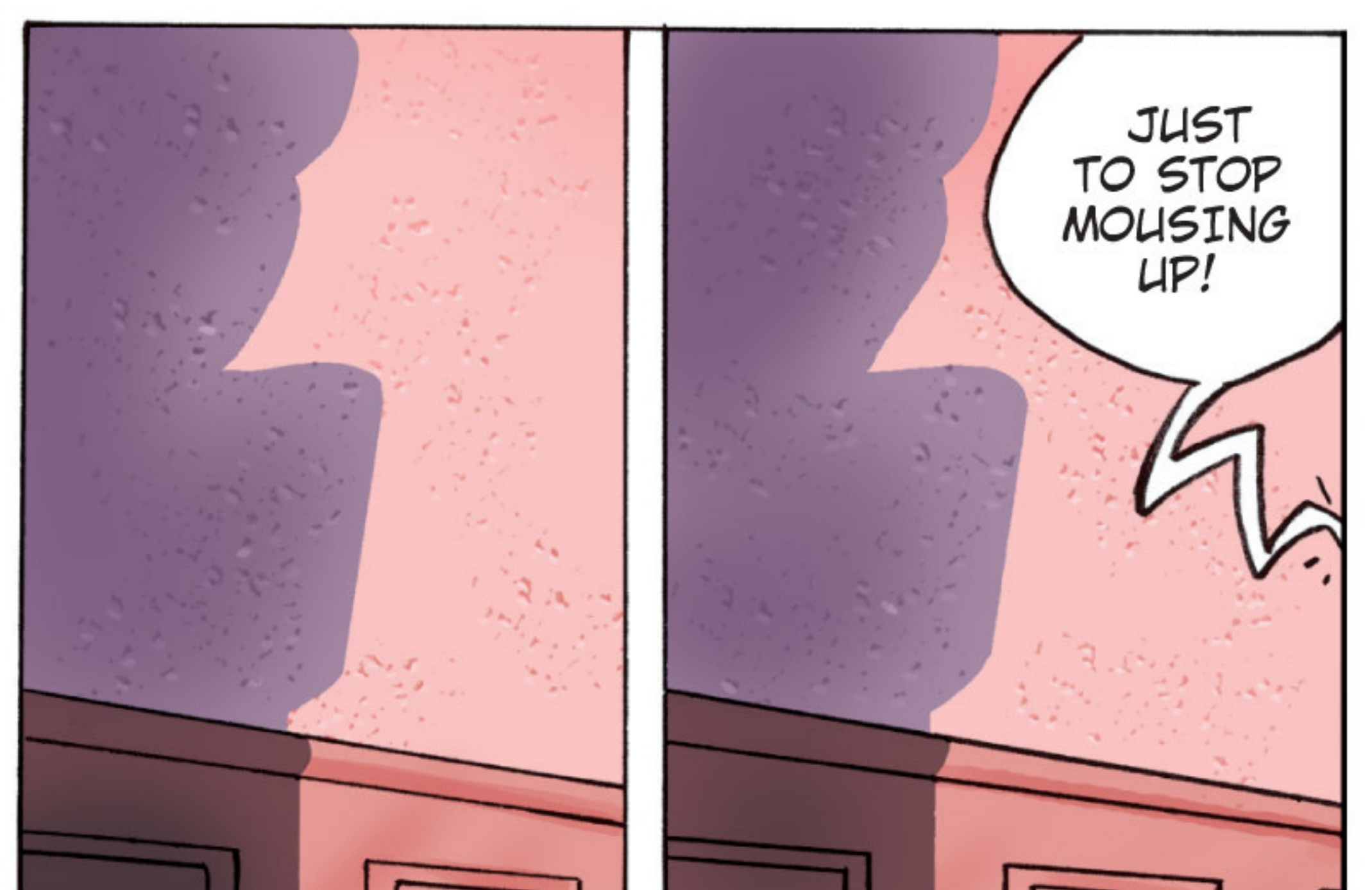
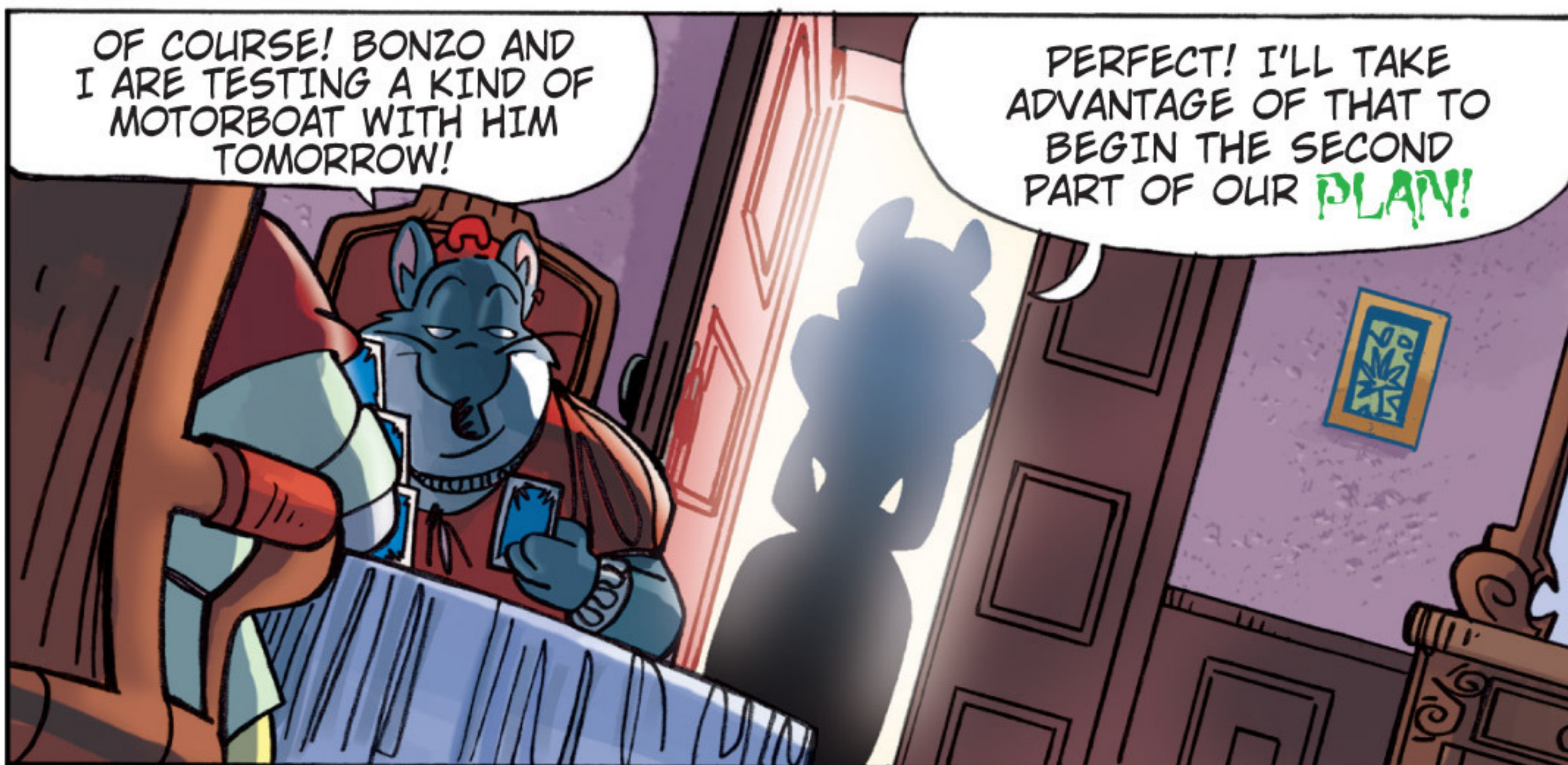
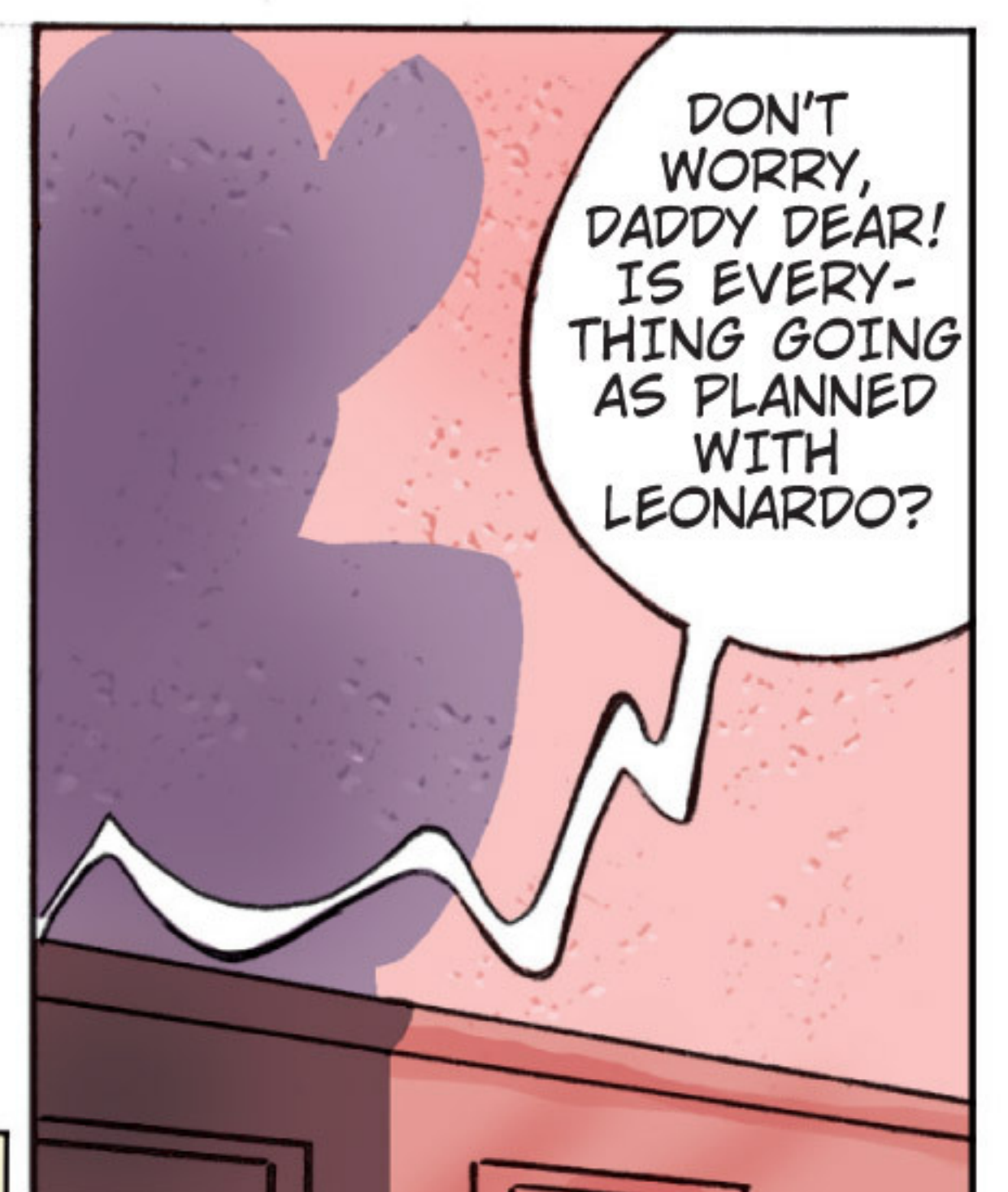
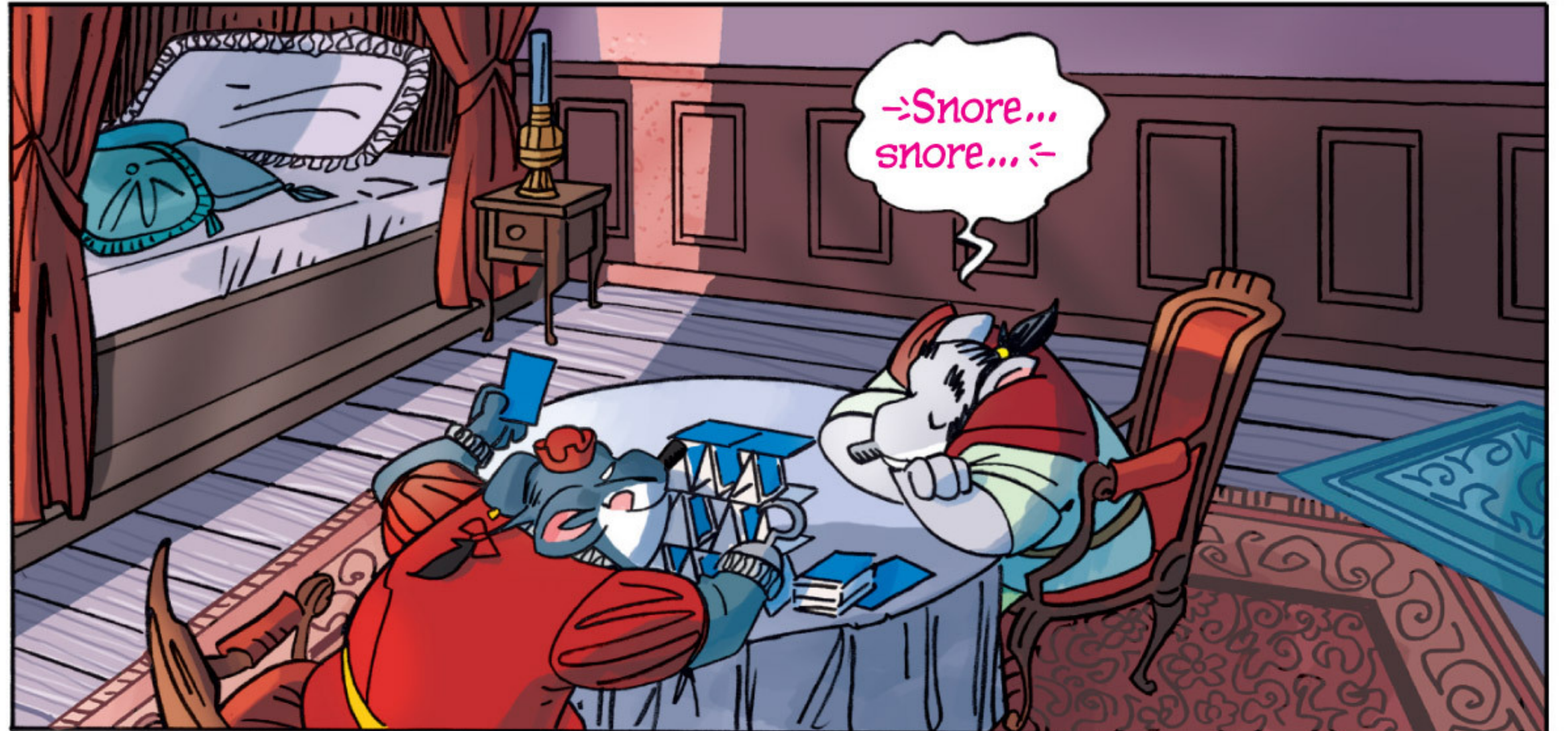
RIGHT... MAYBE
THEY'RE MORE
INTERESTED IN
THE KING!



TRAP'S
NOT
ALTOGETHER
WRONG!
MAYBE
FRANCIS I
COULD
BE THEIR
TARGET!









THE NEXT MORNING, LEONARDO SUMMONED US TO THE BANKS OF THE CHANNEL TO WATCH HIM LAUNCH HIS "PADDLE BOAT."

THE PADDLE BOAT

LEONARDO DESIGNED A BOAT WITH PADDLES THAT WERE OPERATED BY MUSCLE POWER (INSTEAD OF STEAM, AS WOULD HAPPEN CENTURIES LATER). THANKS TO THE PADDLES, LEONARDO COULD NAVIGATE VERY QUICKLY.

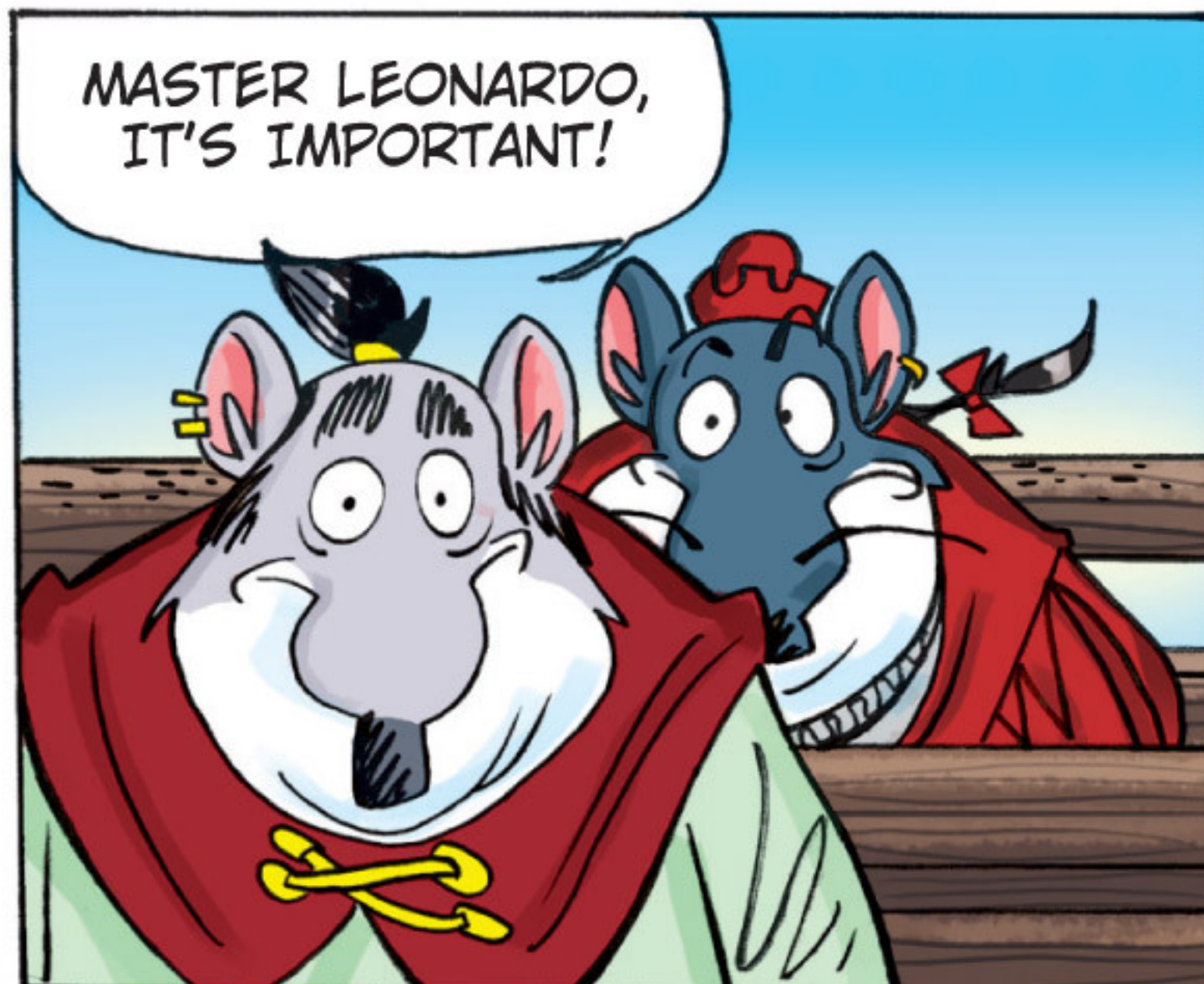


WHEN I SHOW YOU HOW THIS BOAT WORKS, YOU'LL BE SPEECHLESS!



UHM... MASTER LEONARDO... I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING...

LATER, BONZETON! I'M TALKING!



MASTER LEONARDO, IT'S IMPORTANT!



HMPH! TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT?

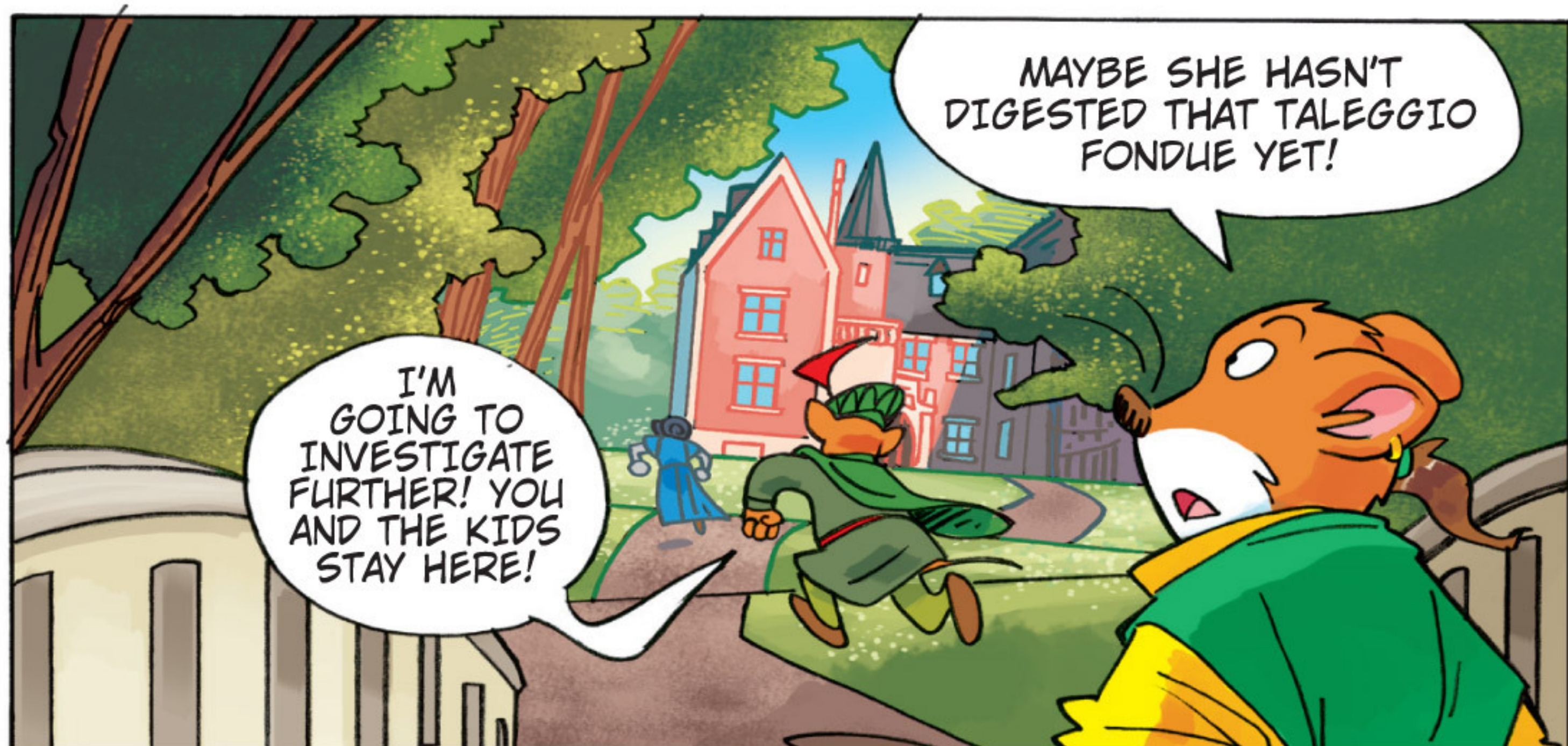
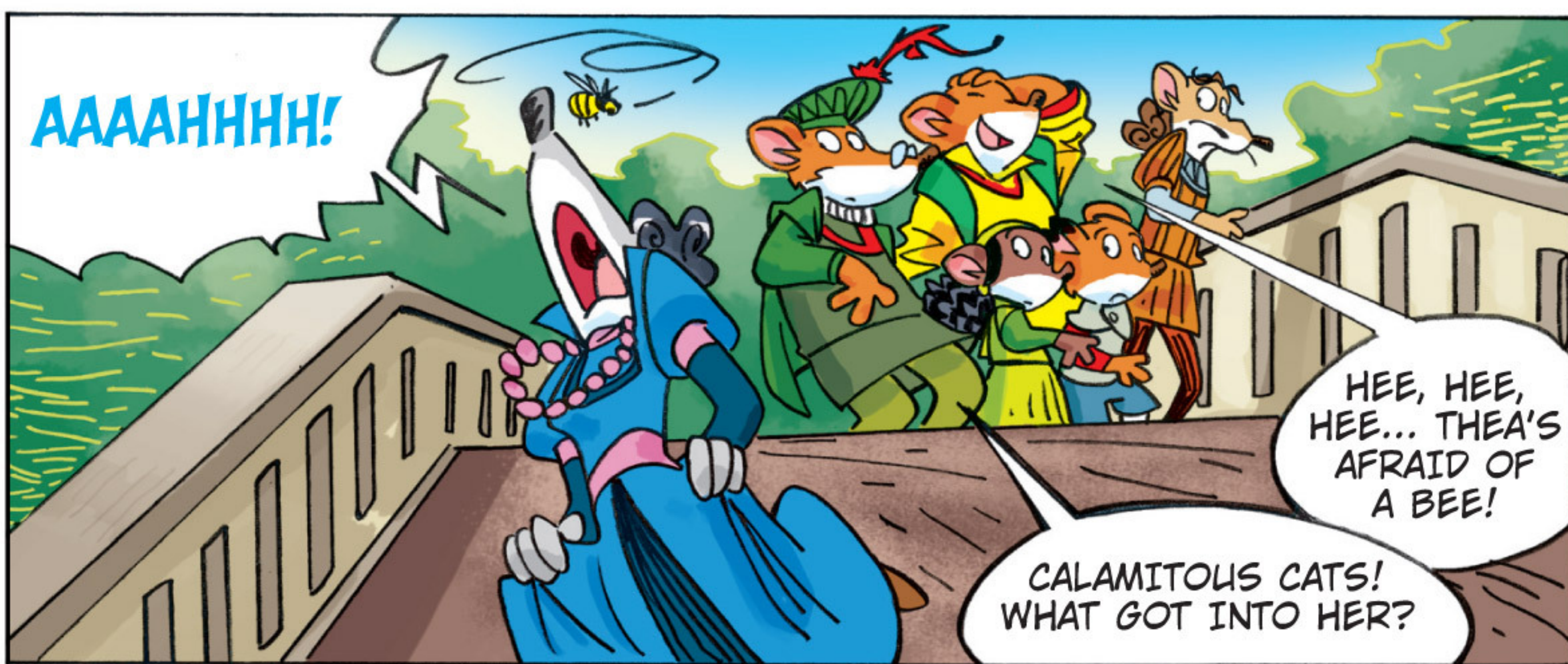
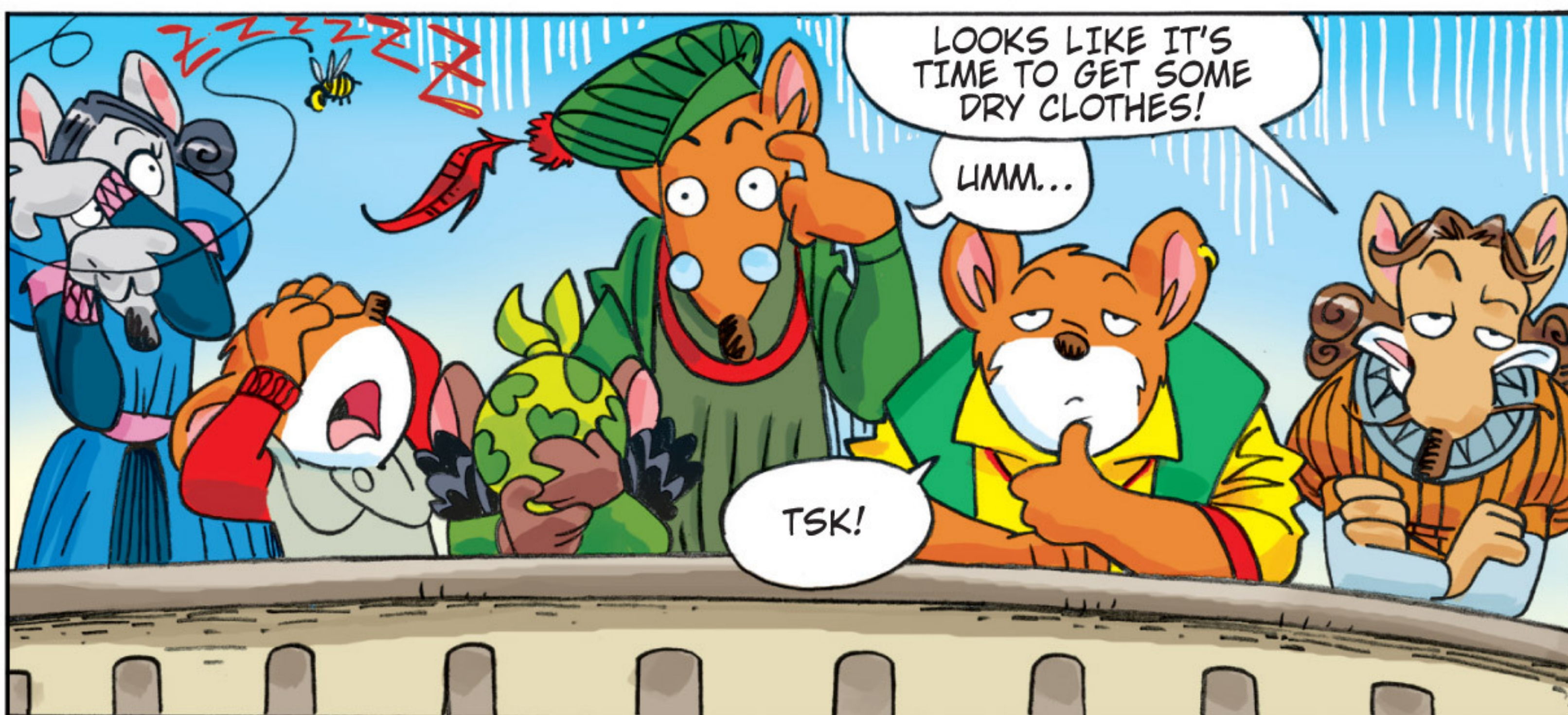
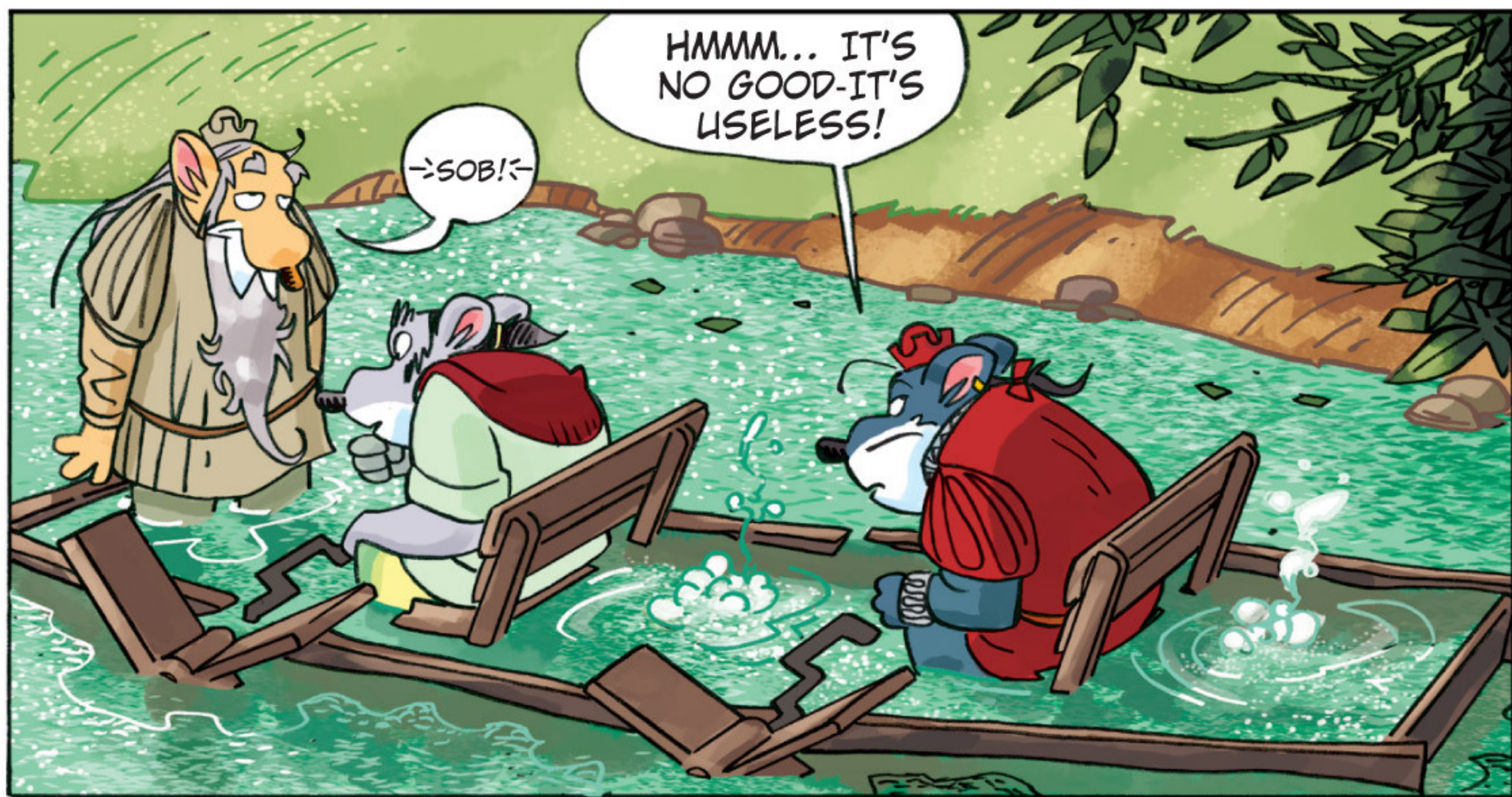


THE BOAT IS SINKING!

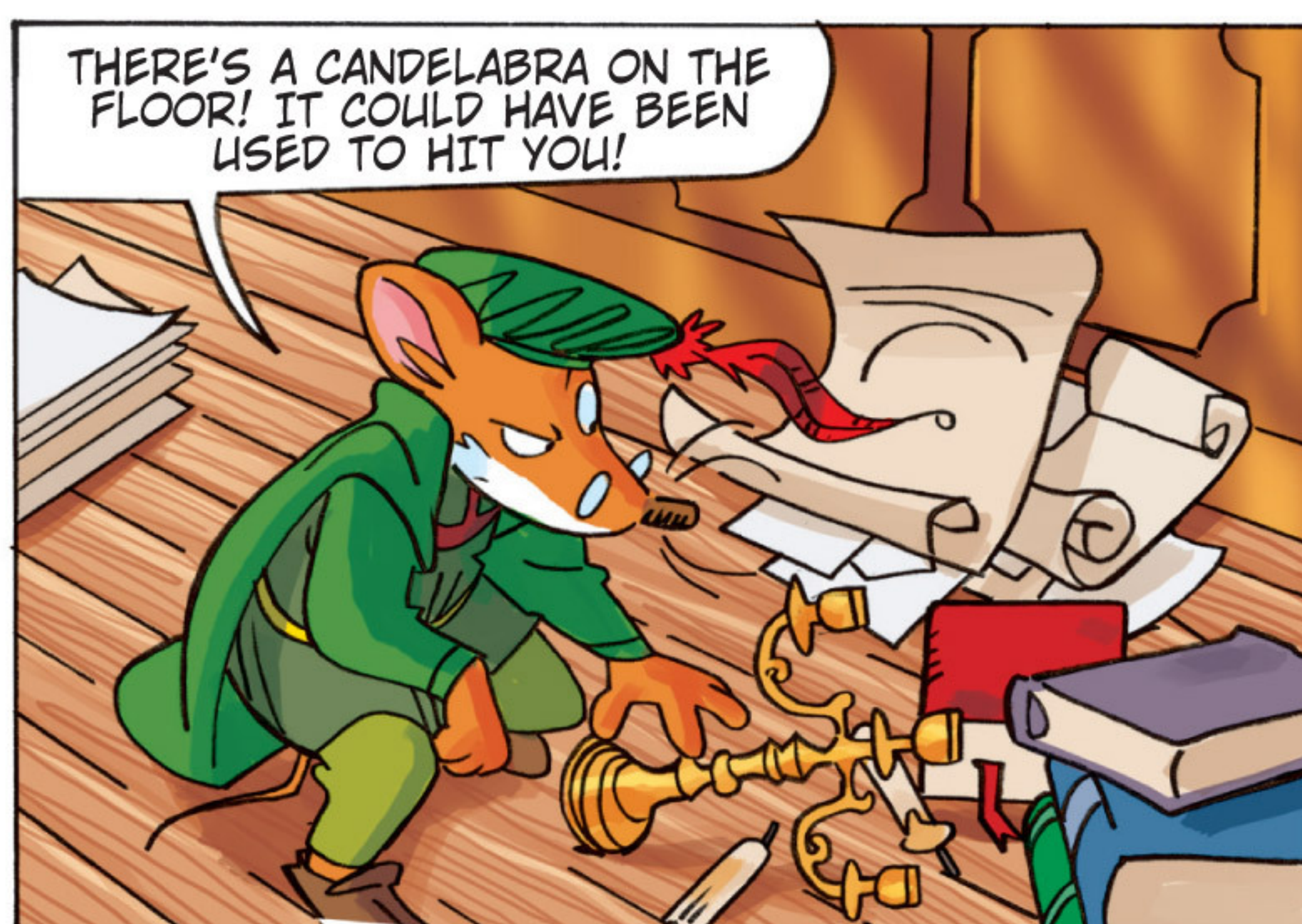
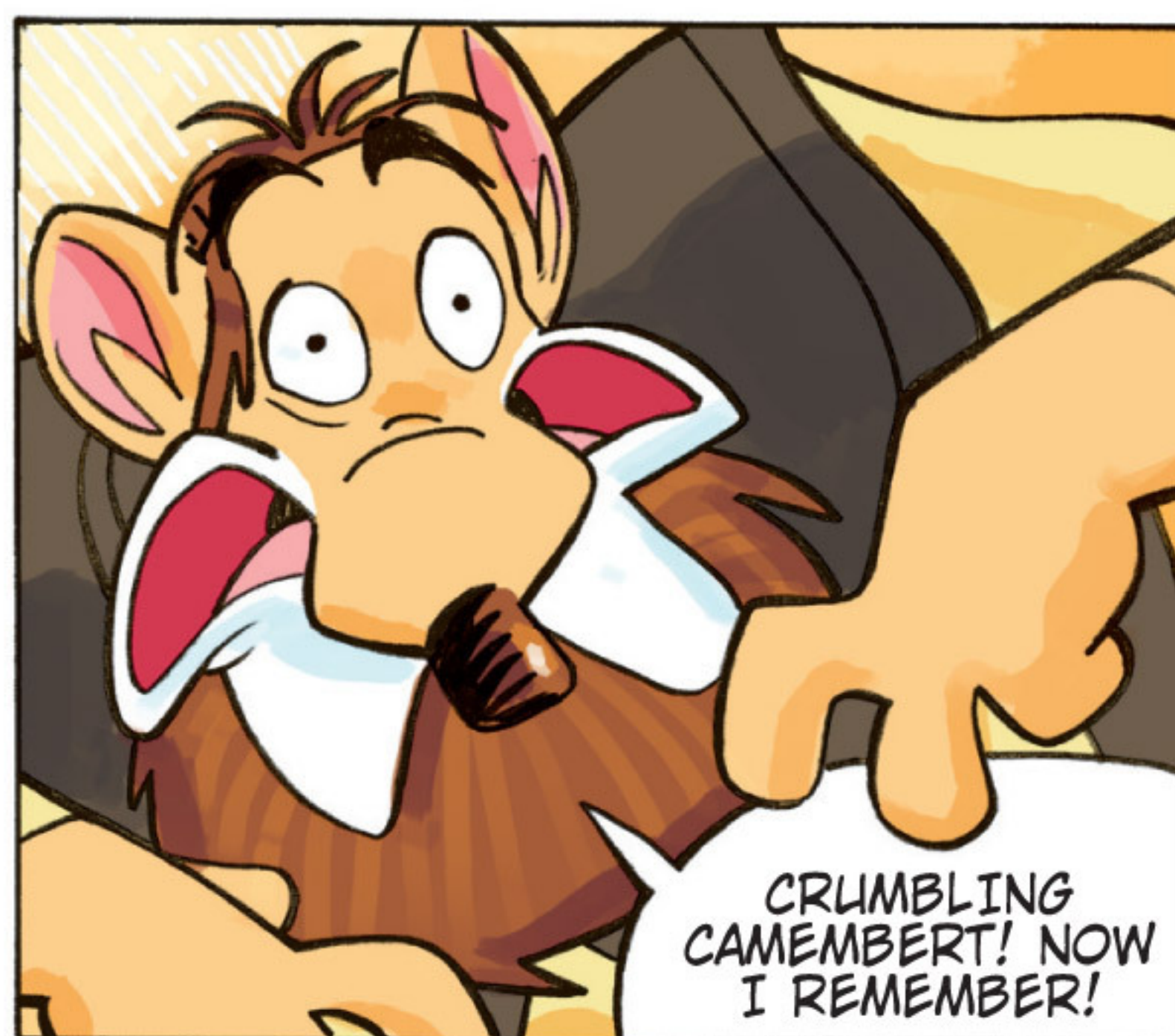
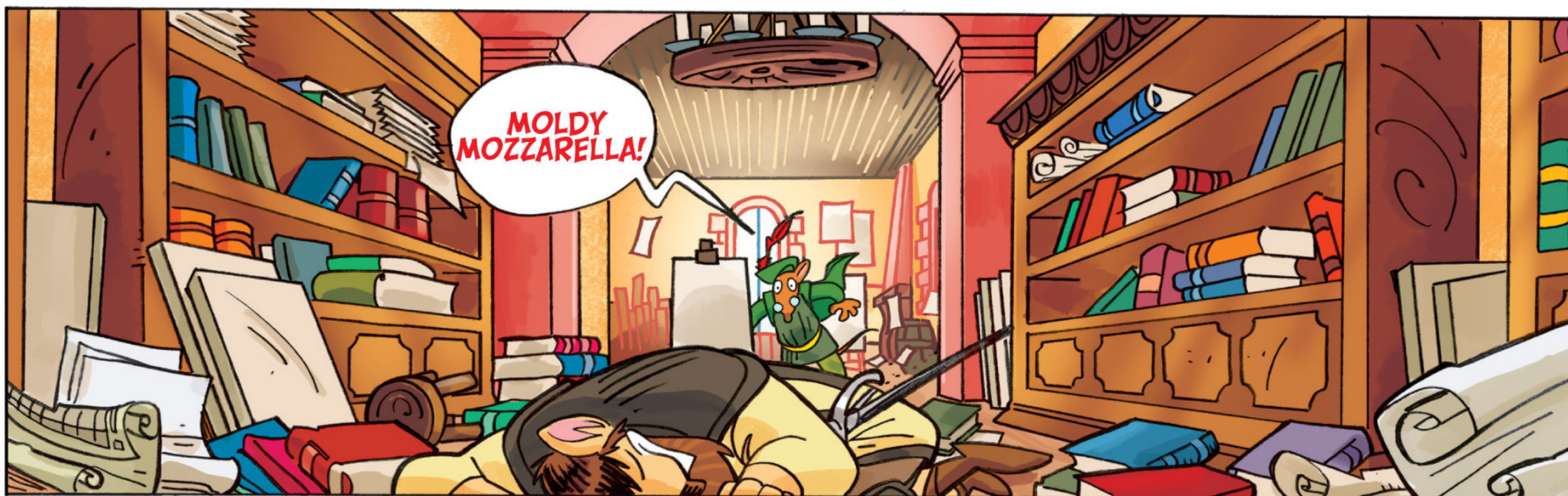
FRANTIC FRESH FRESCOES!



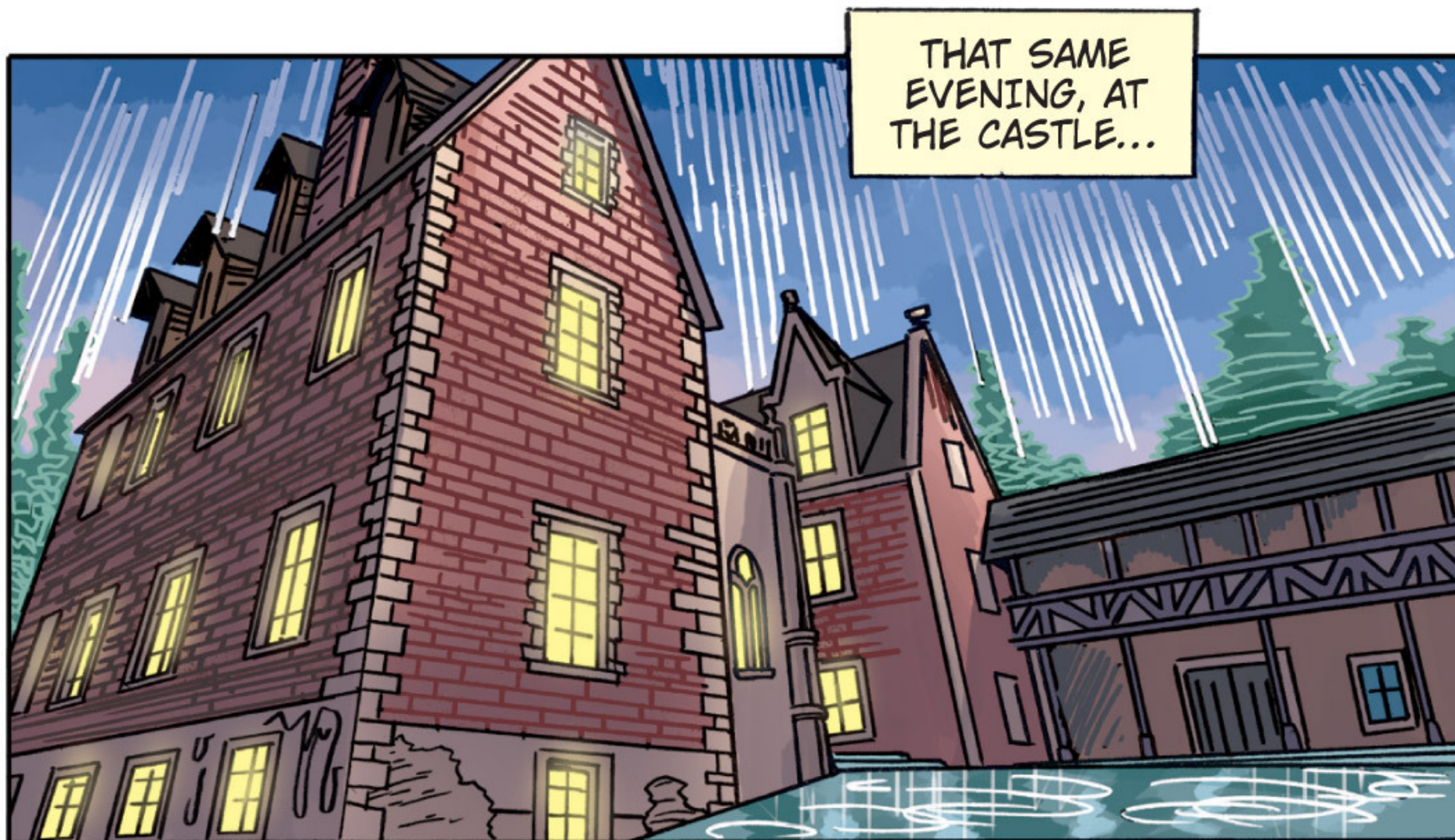
HURRY! START PADDLING!



A LITTLE LATER, AT
THE CASTLE OF
CLOUX...







THAT SAME
EVENING, AT
THE CASTLE...



NOTHING!
WE DIDN'T
EVEN FIND A
CLUE!

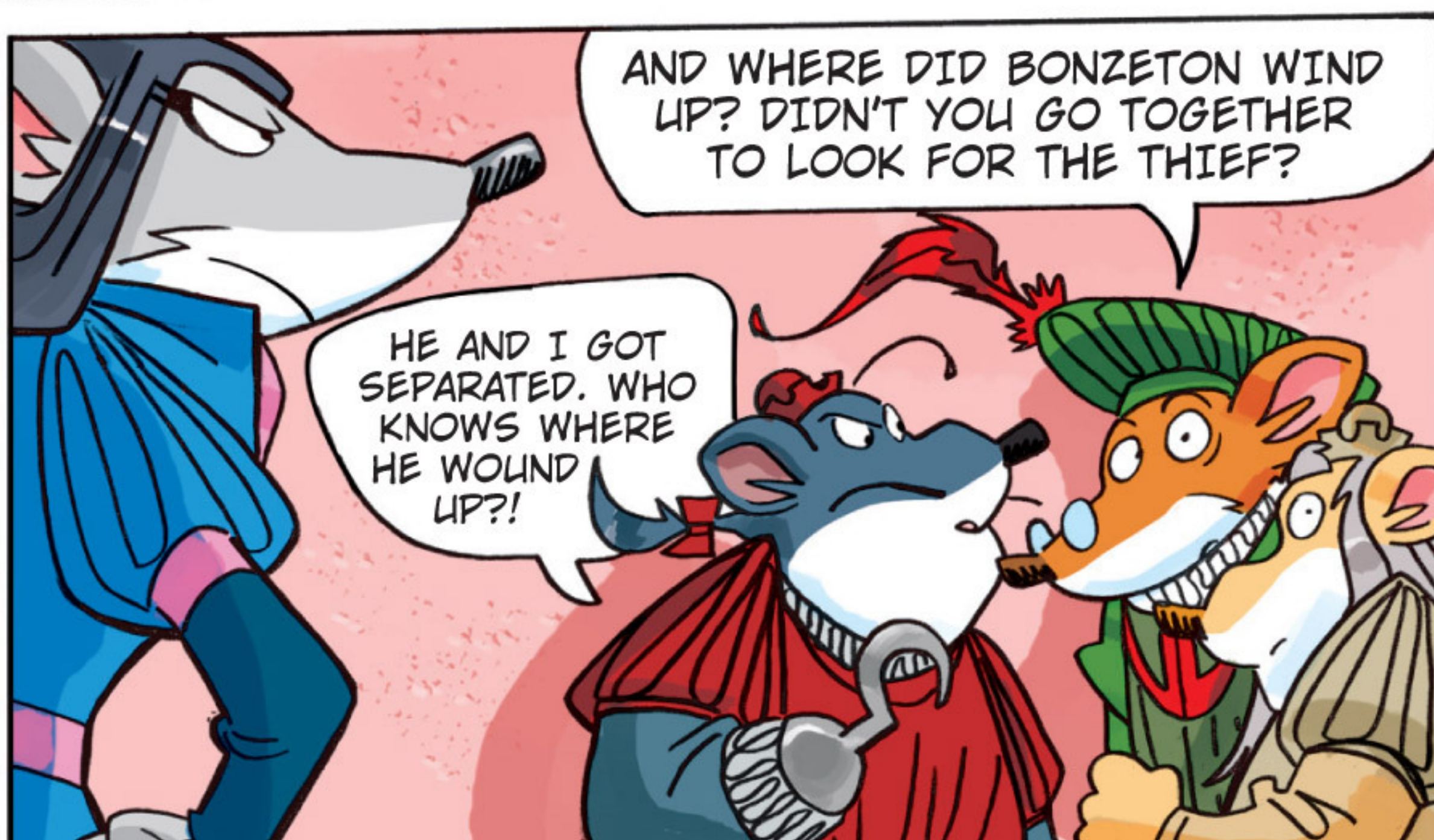


DON'T
WORRY,
STILTONEAUX,
YOU DID WHAT
YOU COULD!



WELCOME BACK,
CATARD! DO
YOU HAVE ANY
NEWS?

WE CHECKED
THE WOODS, BUT
WE DIDN'T FIND
ANYTHING!



AND WHERE DID BONZETON WIND
UP? DIDN'T YOU GO TOGETHER
TO LOOK FOR THE THIEF?

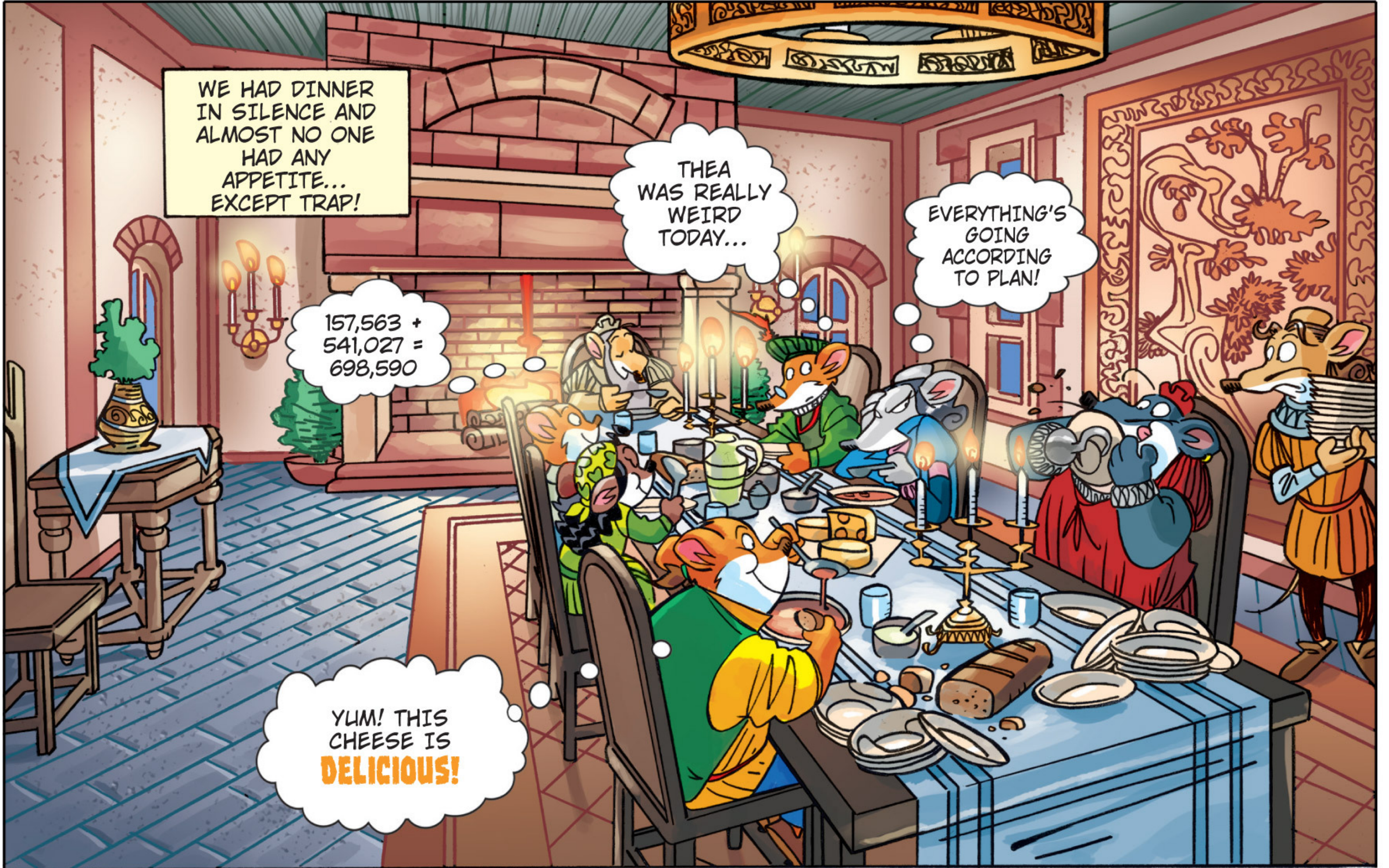
HE AND I GOT
SEPARATED. WHO
KNOWS WHERE
HE WOULD
UP?!



THEN WE'LL HAVE TO ORGANIZE A
TEAM TO GO SEARCH
FOR HIM!

NOT AT ALL! A
LITTLE RAIN WILL
CLEAR HIS HEAD!

WELL, THAT'S
SETTLED! LET'S
GO EAT DINNER!



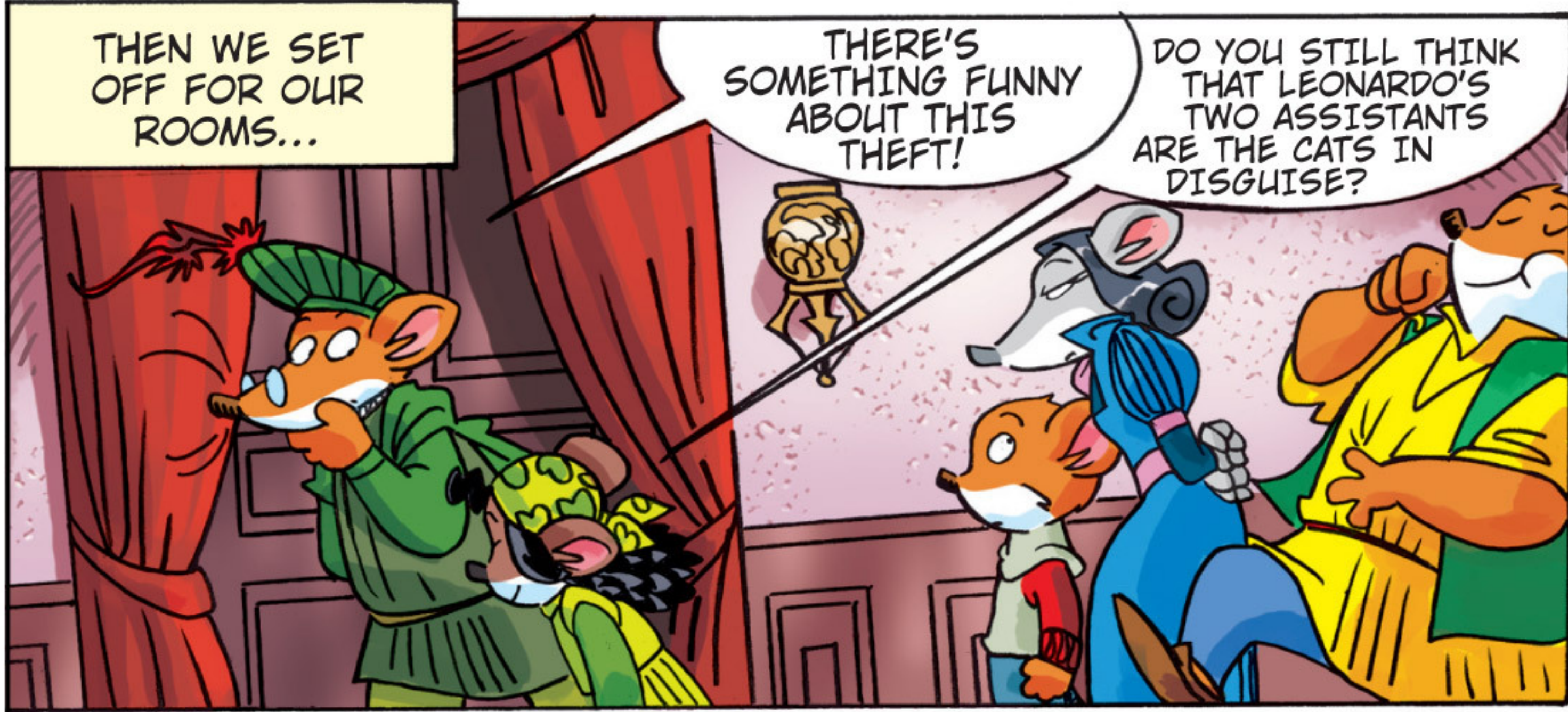
WE HAD DINNER
IN SILENCE AND
ALMOST NO ONE
HAD ANY
APPETITE...
EXCEPT TRAP!

THEA
WAS REALLY
WEIRD
TODAY...

EVERYTHING'S
GOING
ACCORDING
TO PLAN!

157,563 +
541,027 =
698,590

YUM! THIS
CHEESE IS
DELICIOUS!



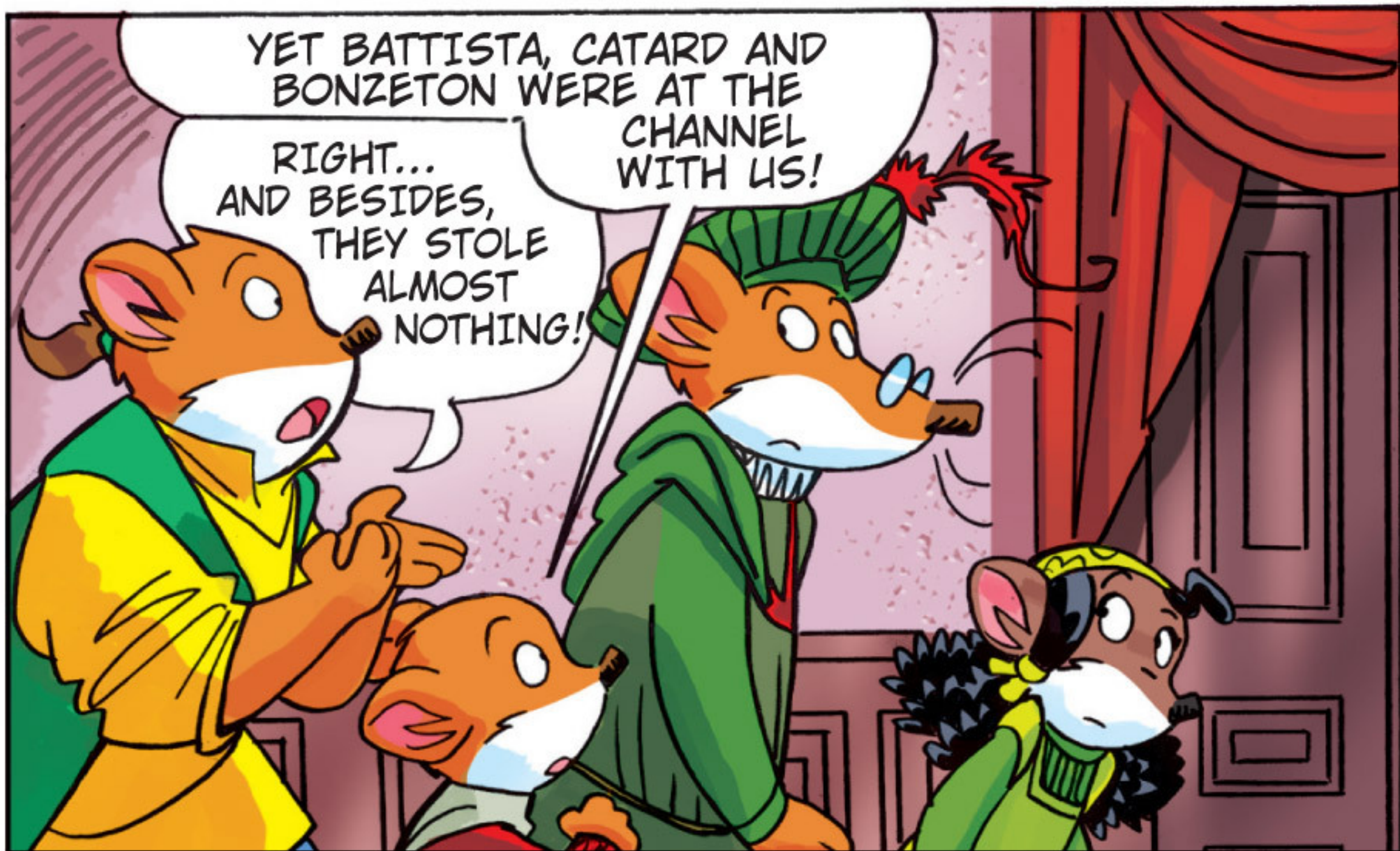
THEN WE SET
OFF FOR OUR
ROOMS...

THERE'S
SOMETHING FUNNY
ABOUT THIS
THEFT!

DO YOU STILL THINK
THAT LEONARDO'S
TWO ASSISTANTS
ARE THE CATS IN
DISGUISE?

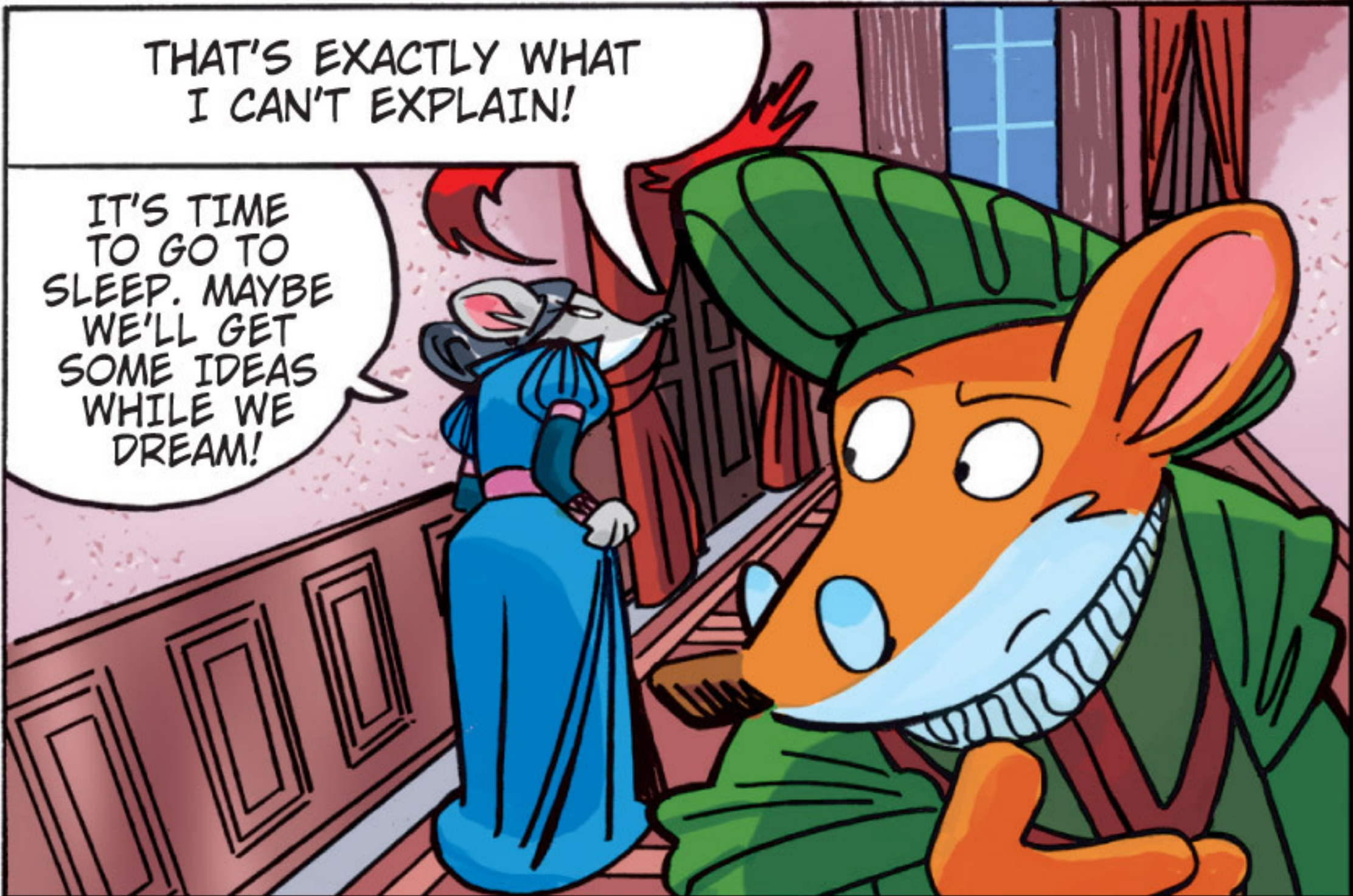


I DON'T KNOW--
BUT I'M VERY
SUSPICIOUS!



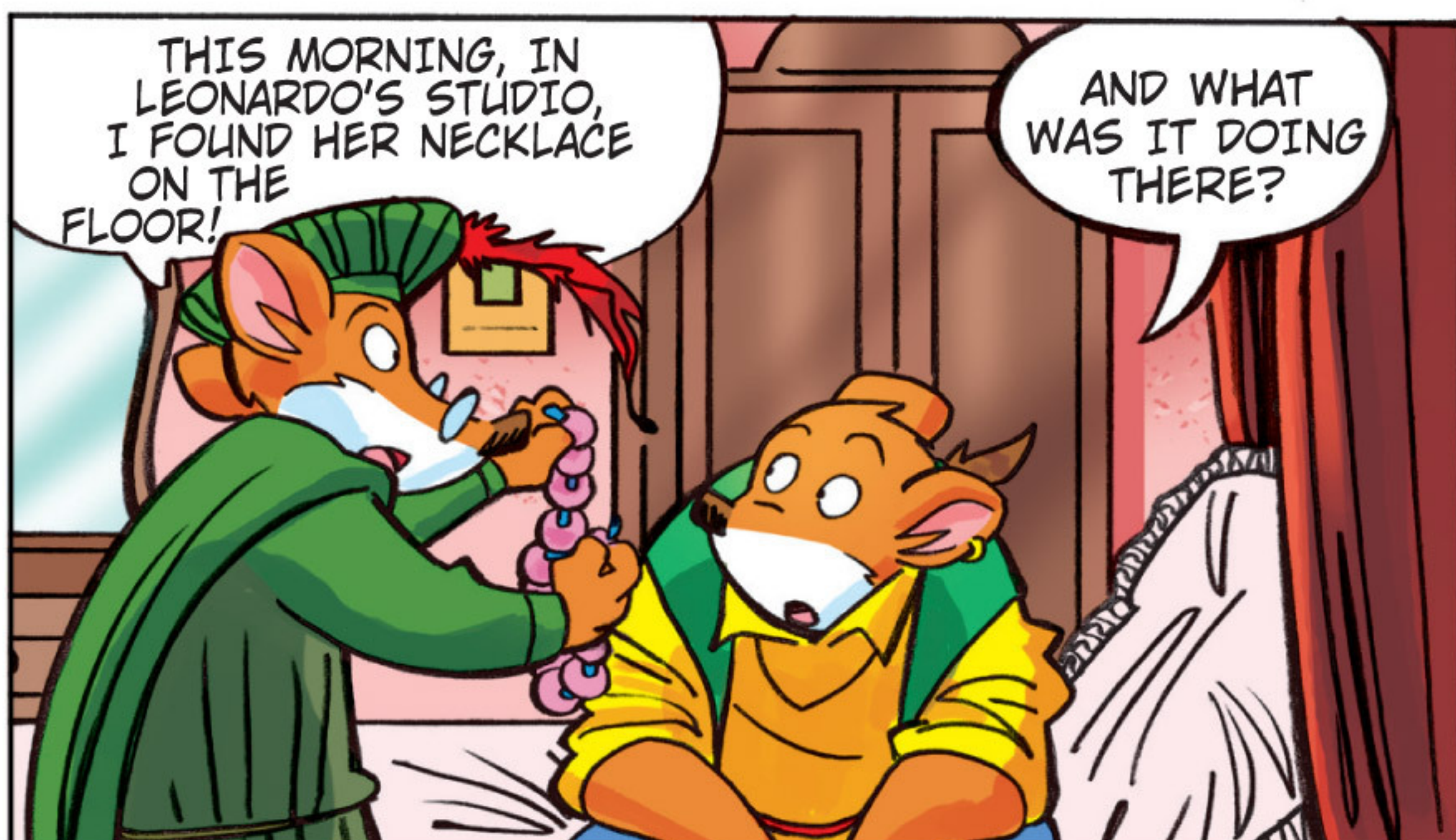
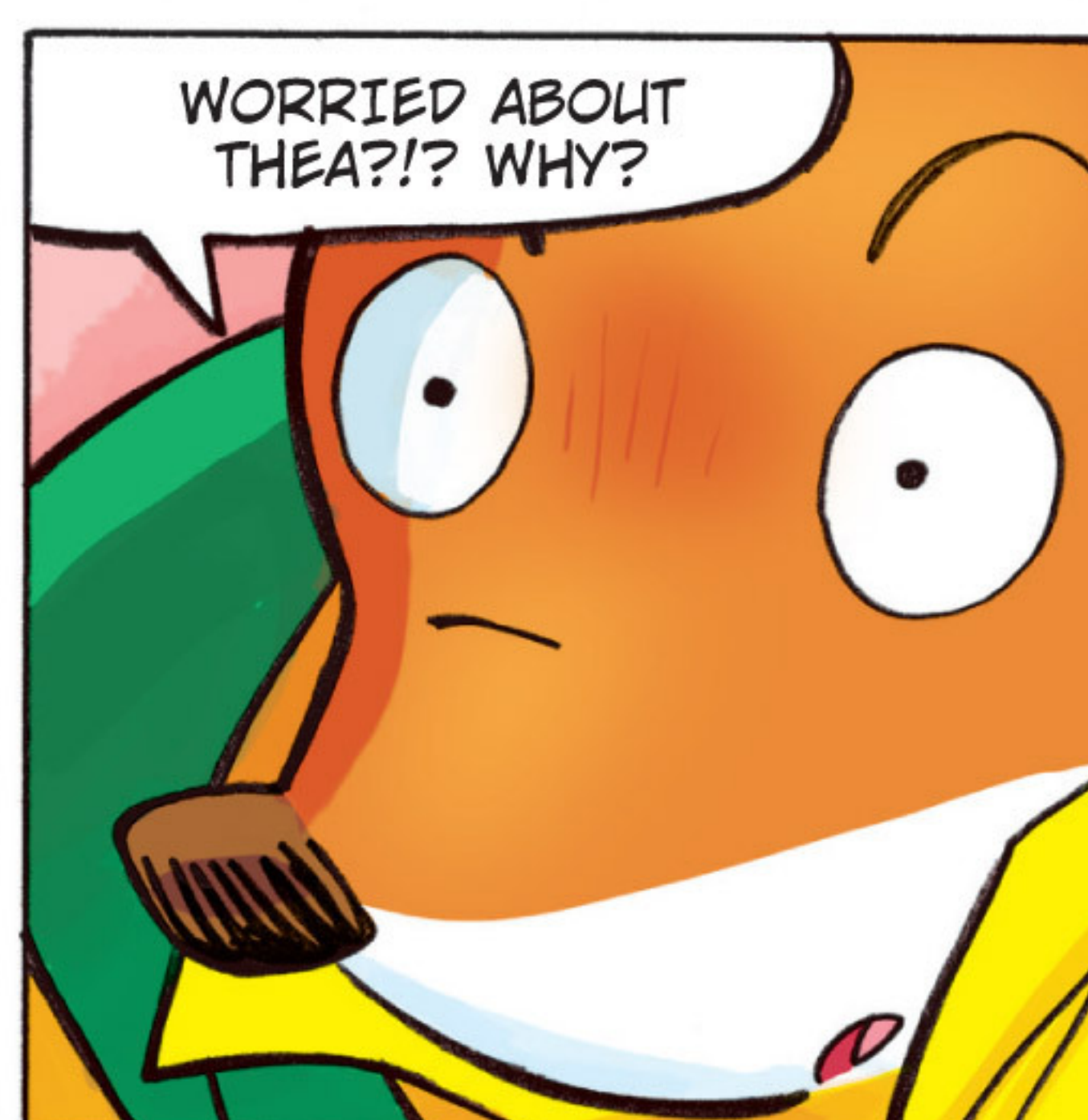
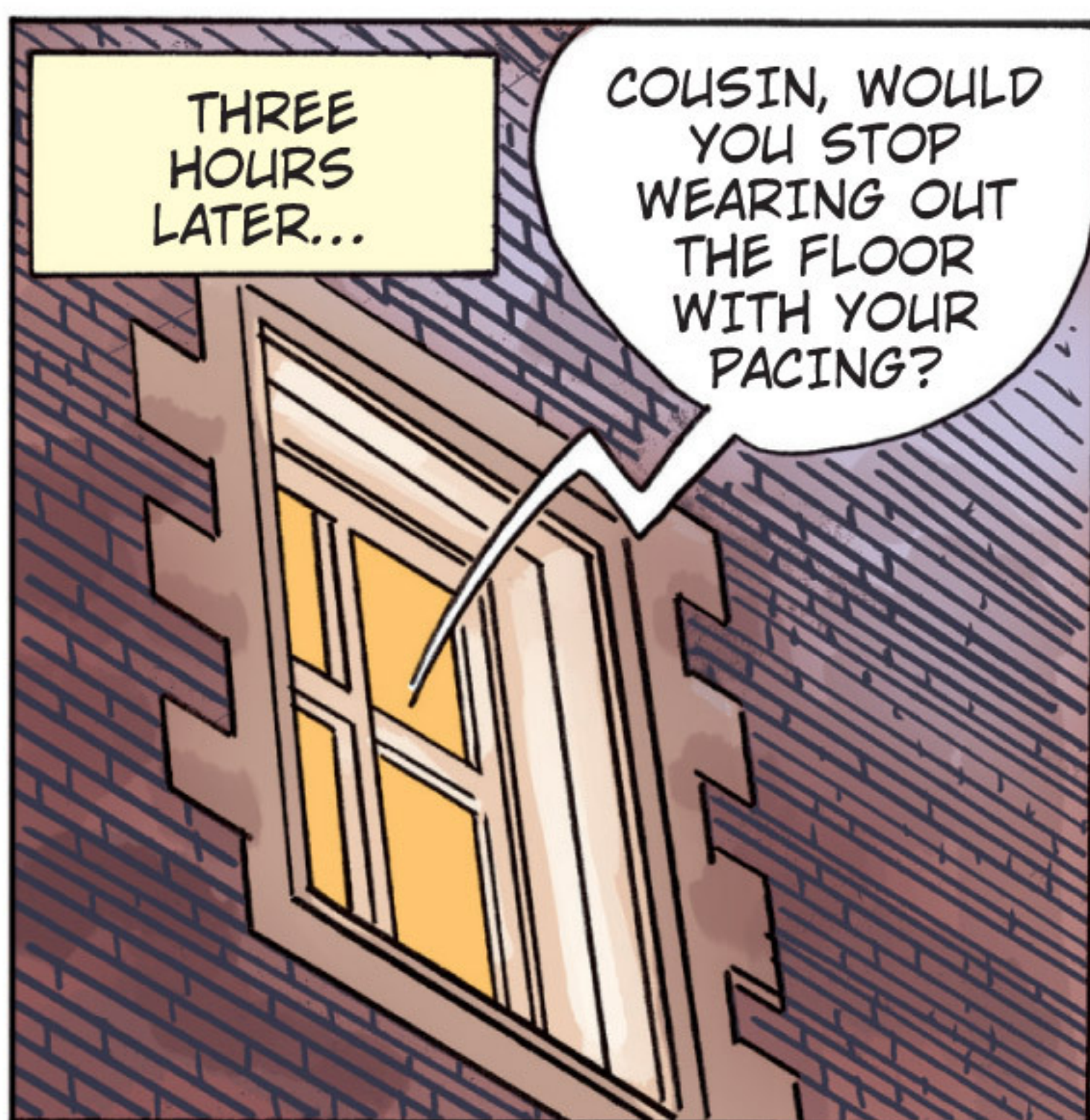
YET BATTISTA, CATARD AND
BONZETON WERE AT THE
CHANNEL WITH US!

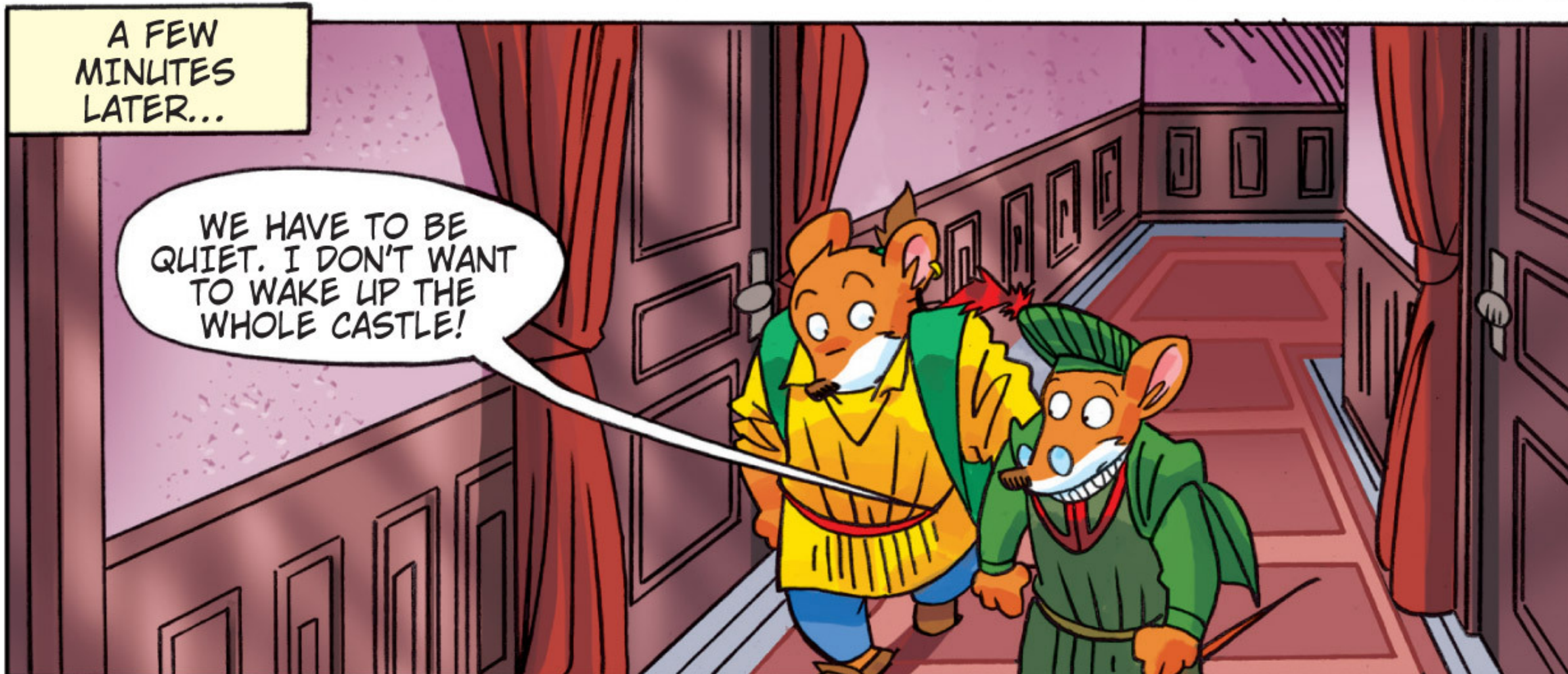
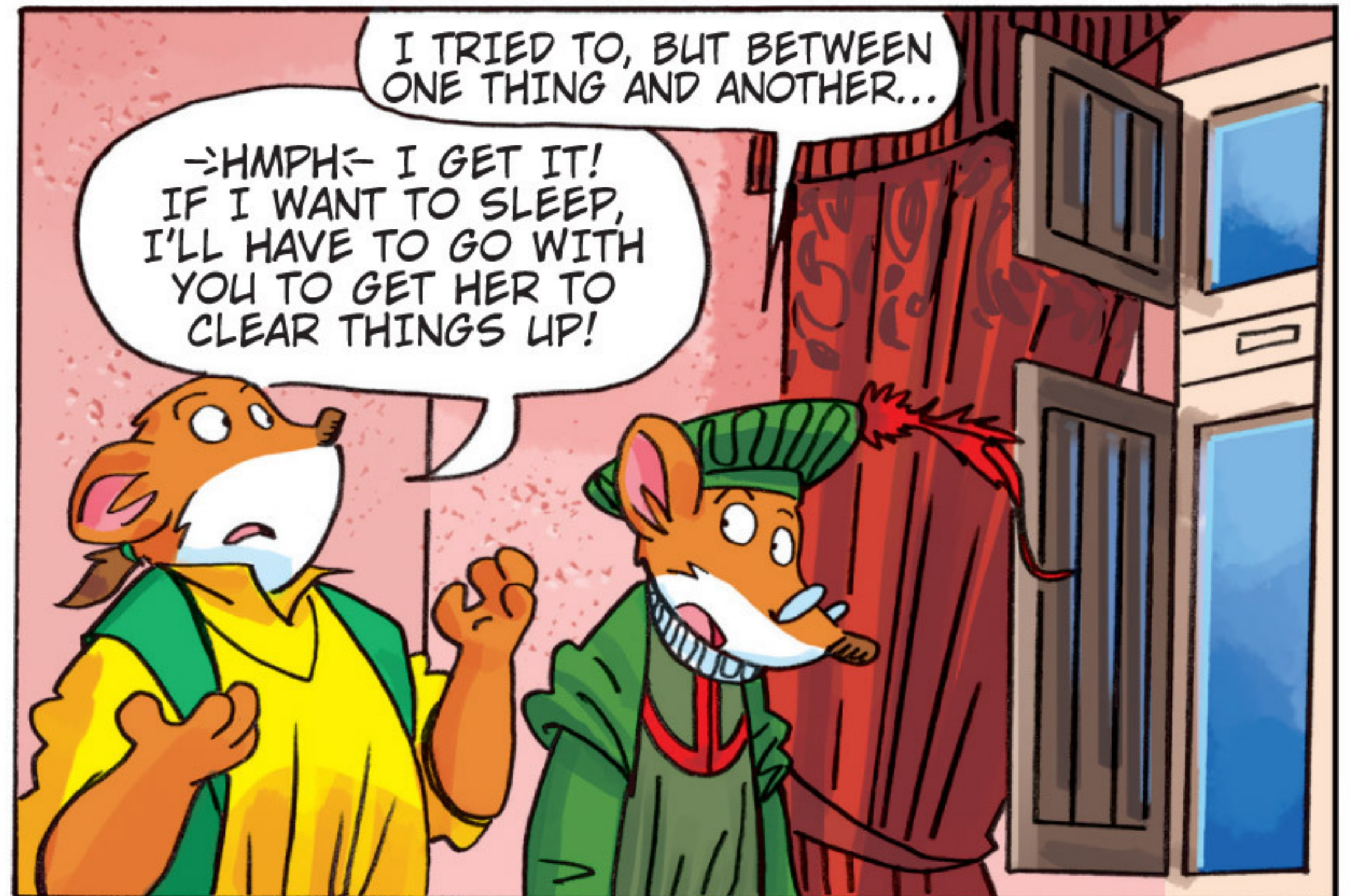
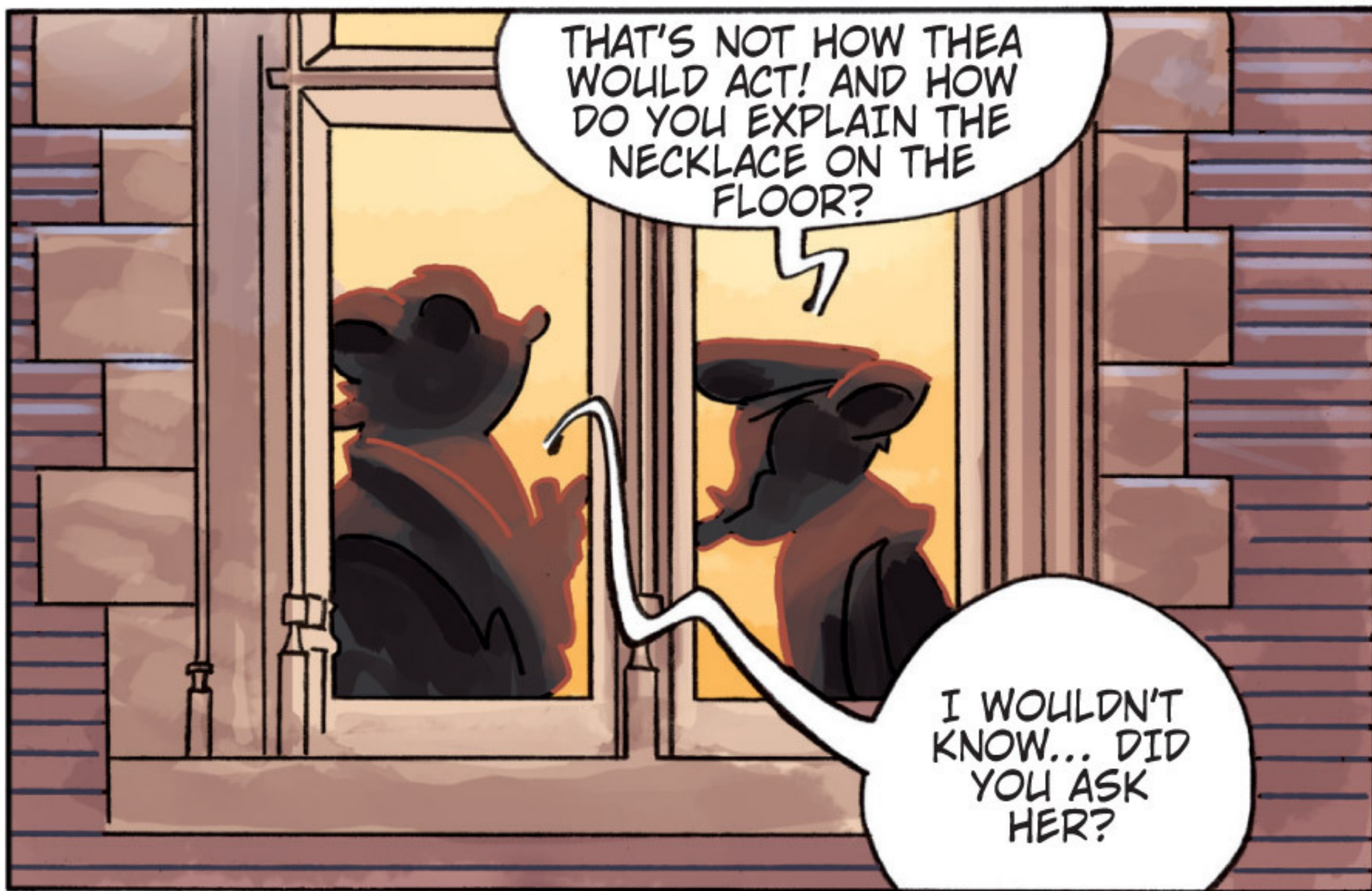
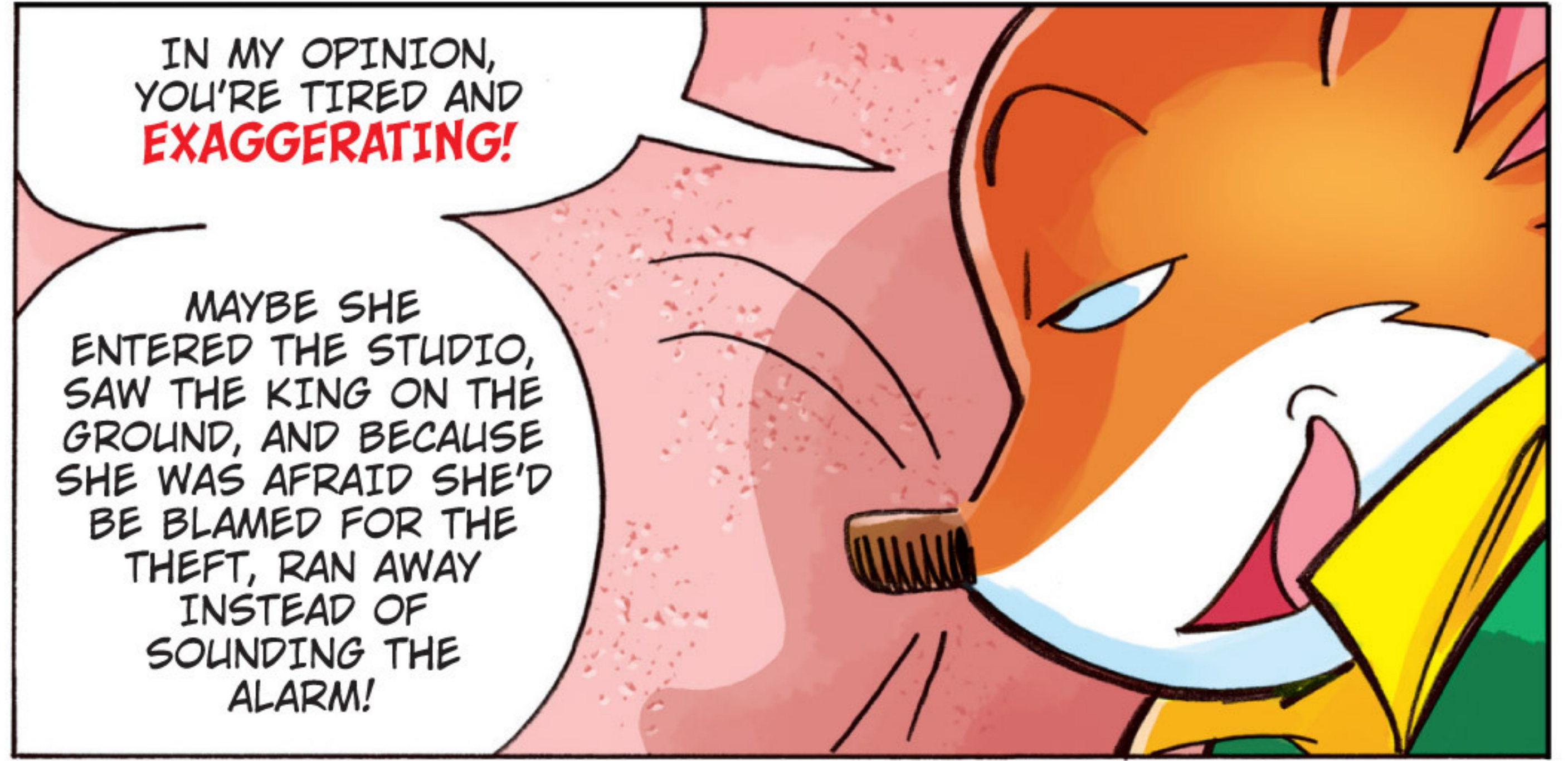
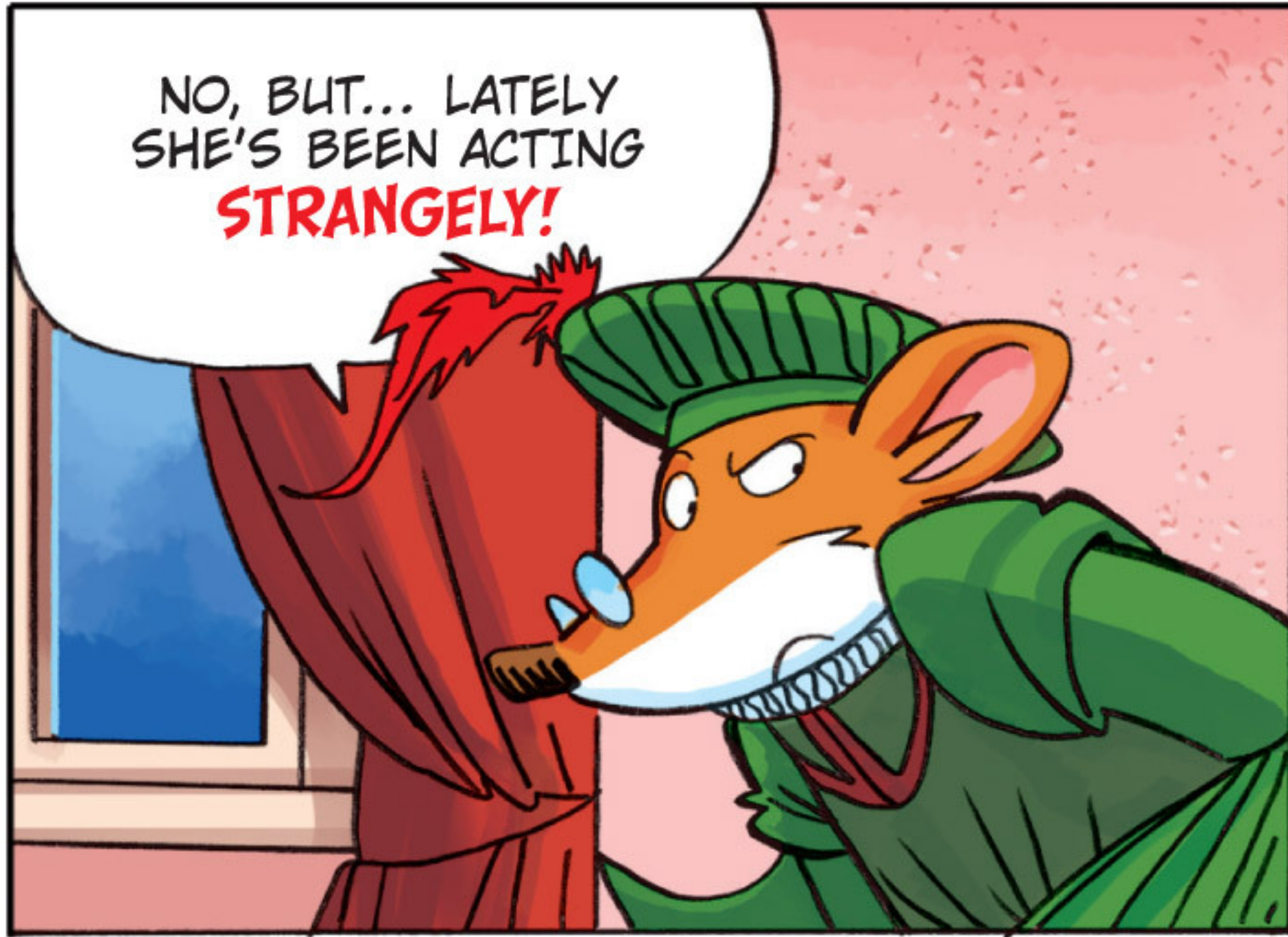
RIGHT...
AND BESIDES,
THEY STOLE
ALMOST
NOTHING!

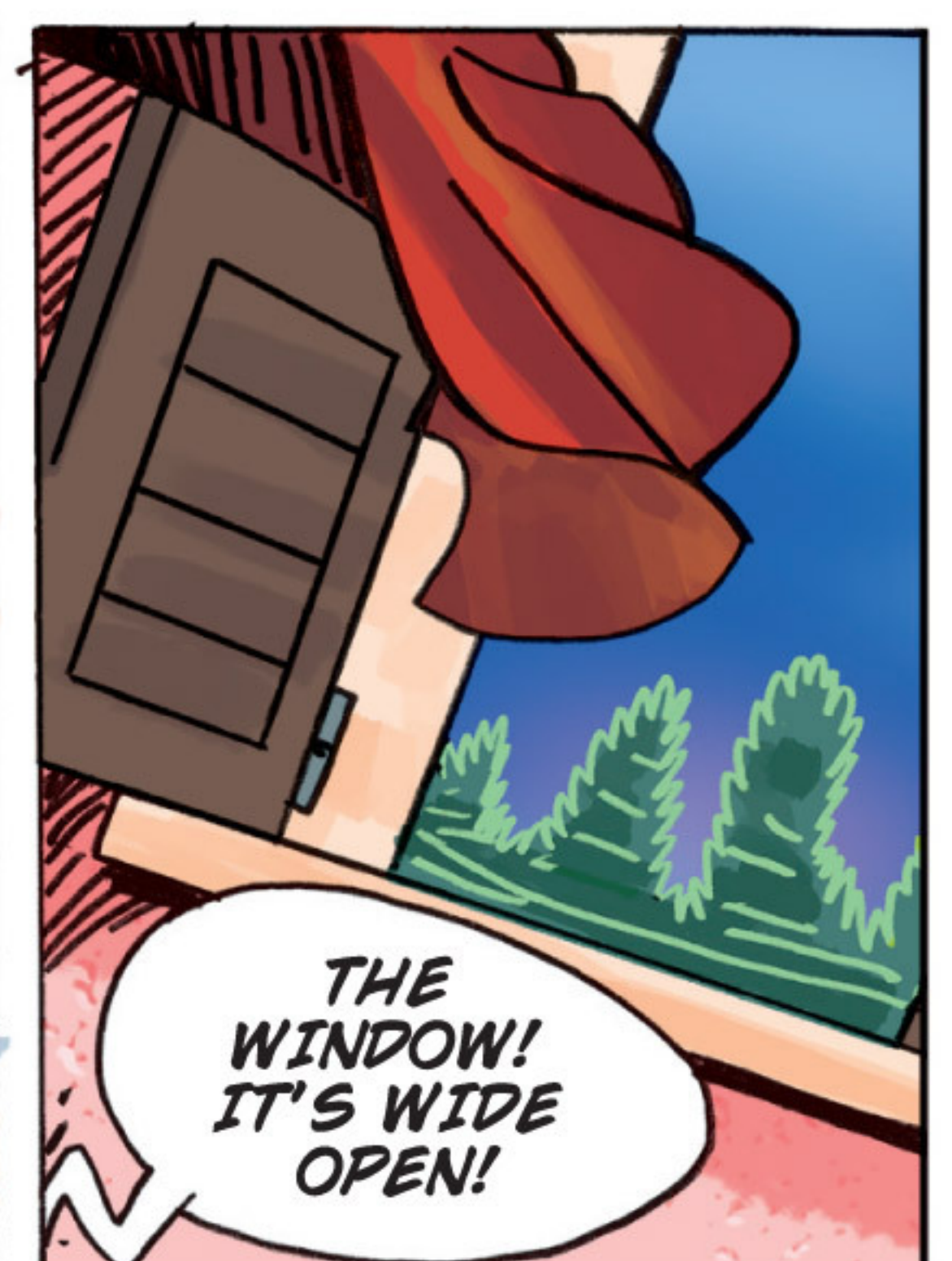
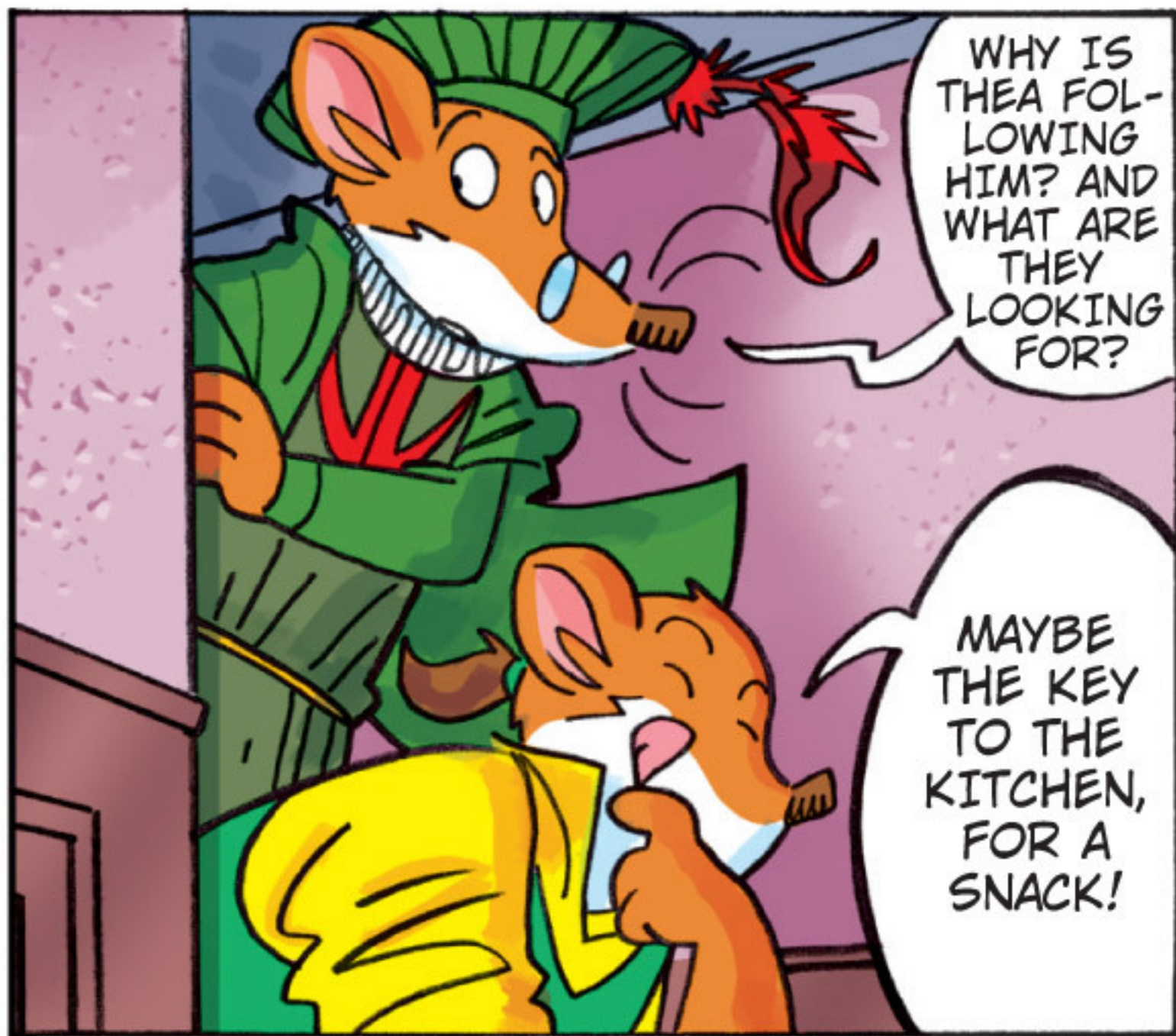
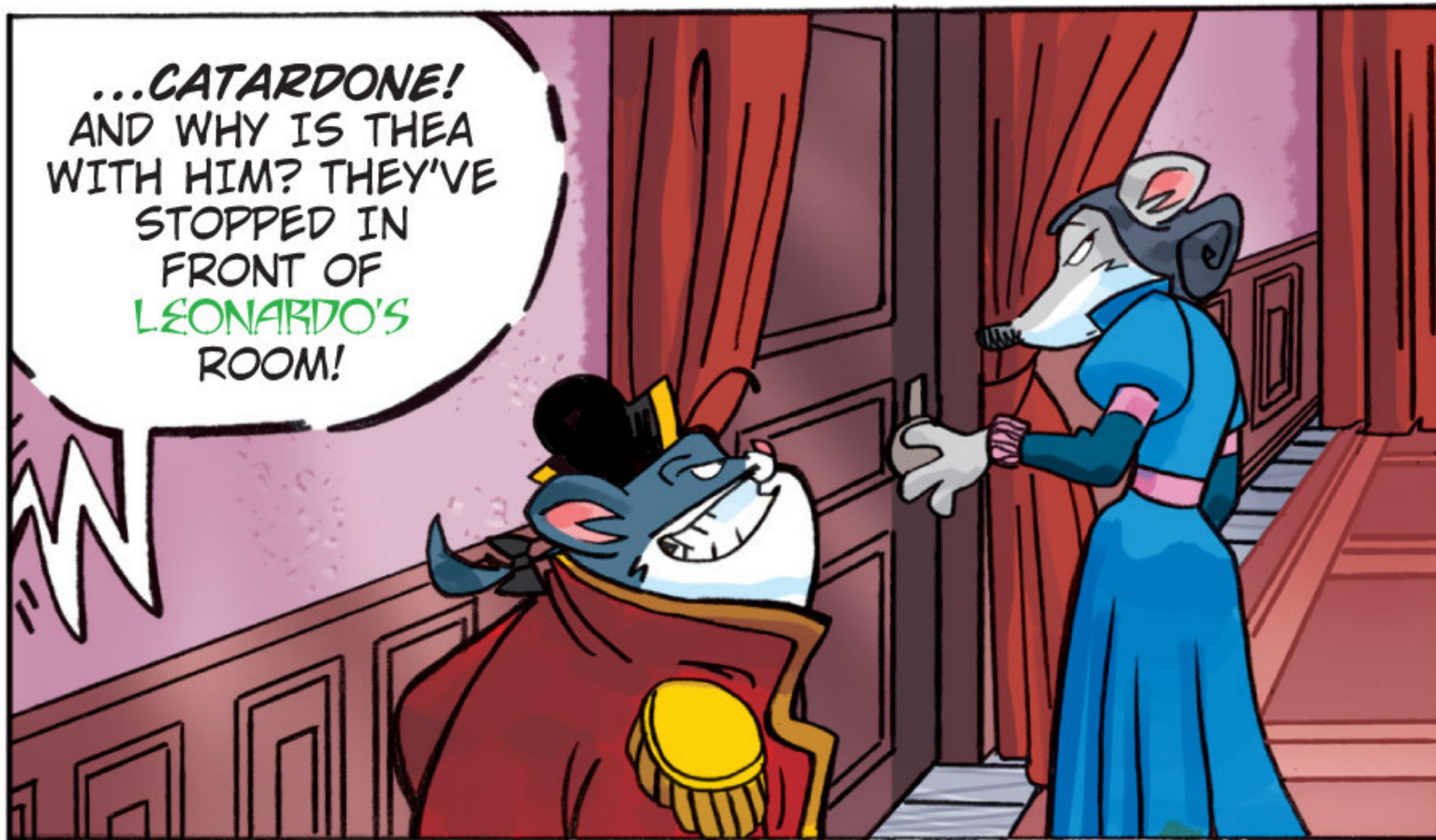
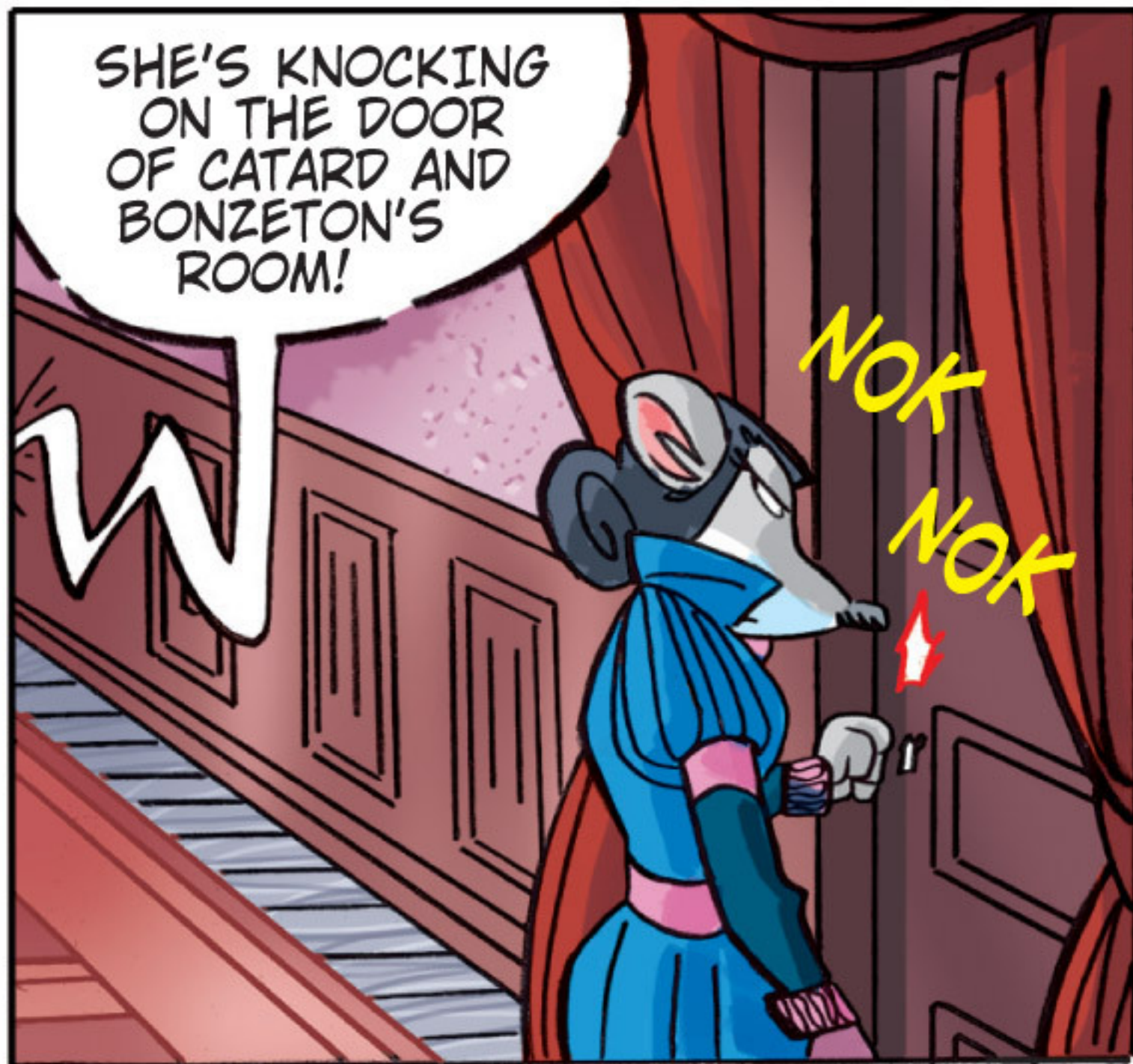


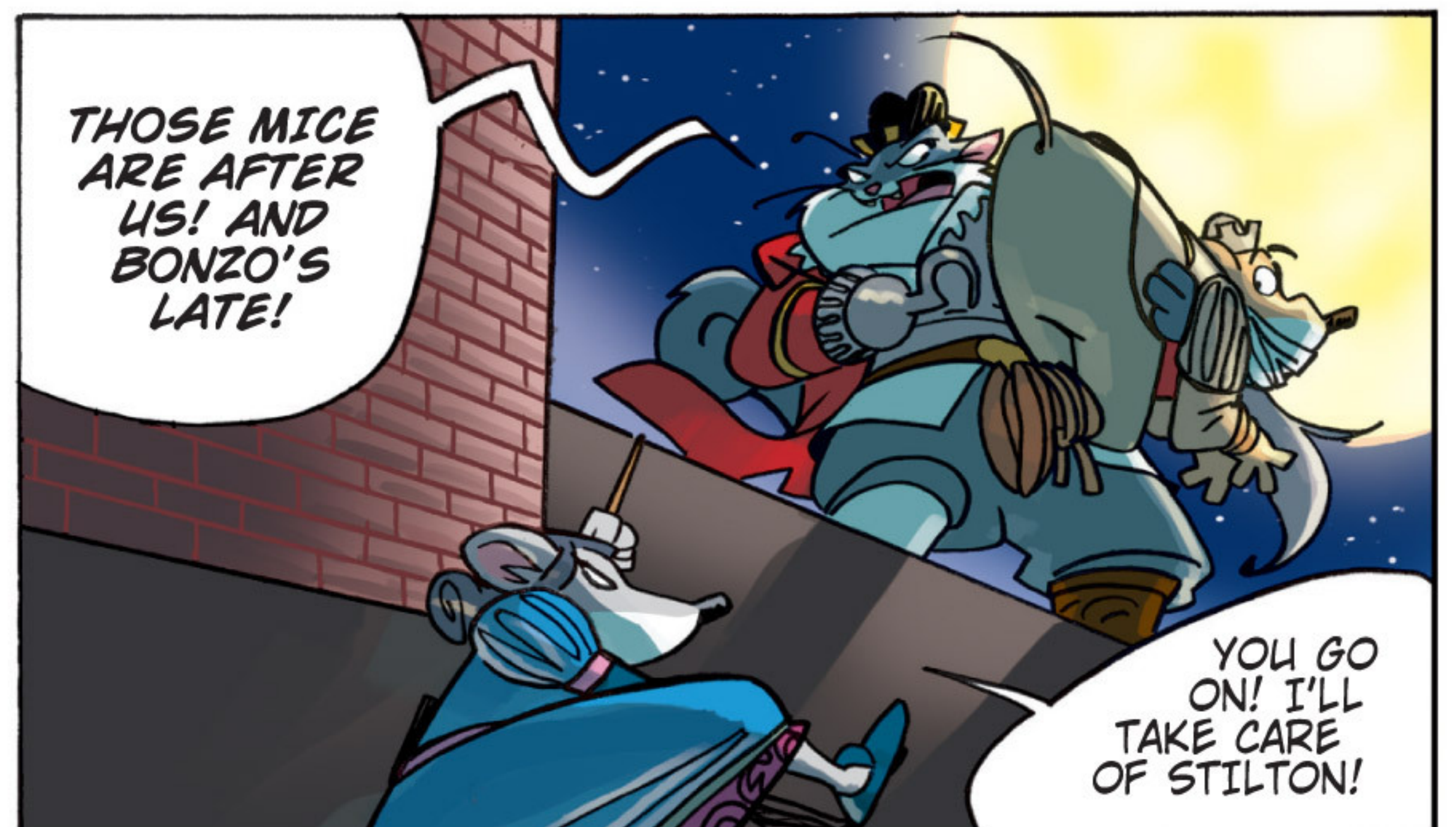
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT
I CAN'T EXPLAIN!

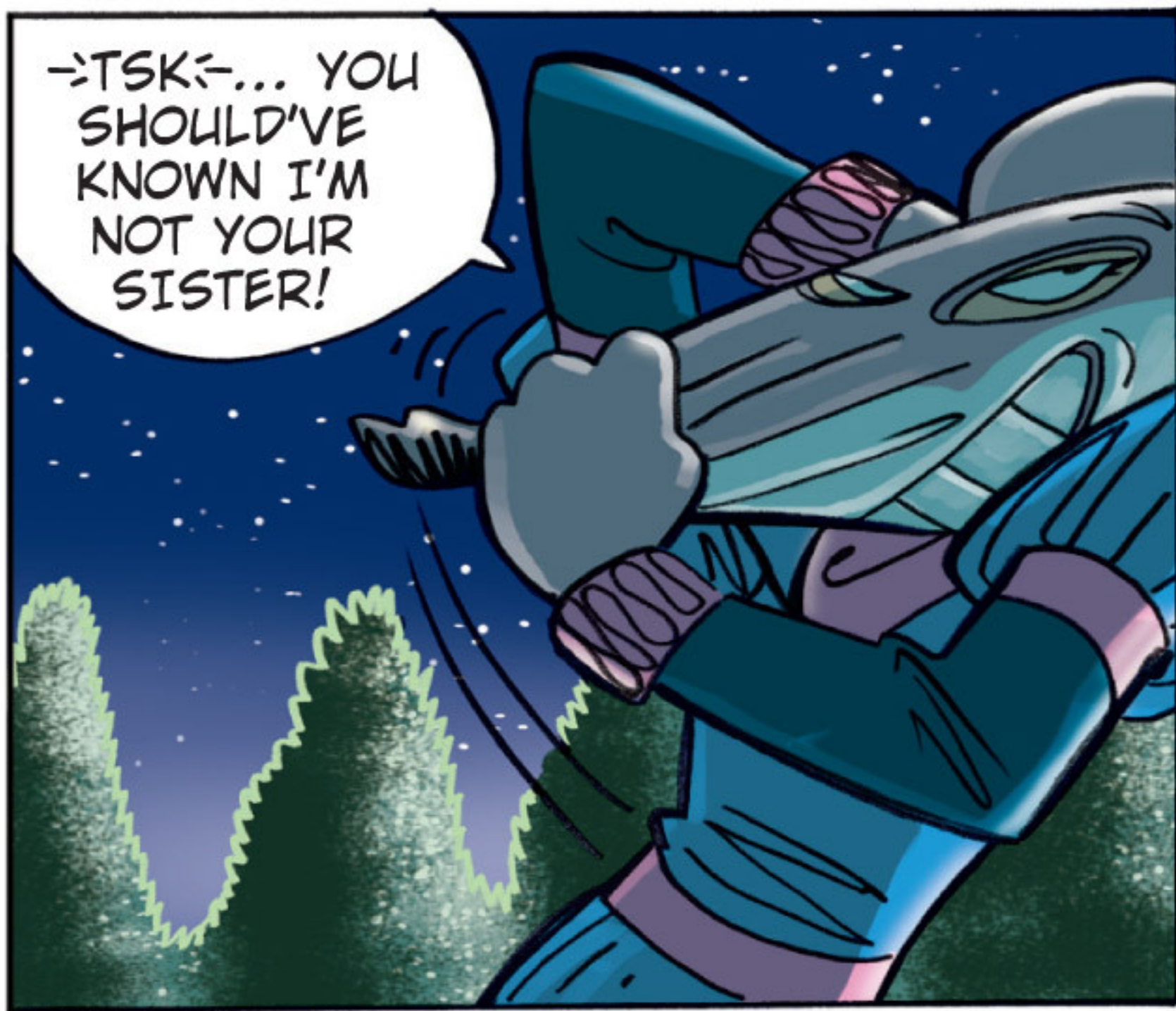
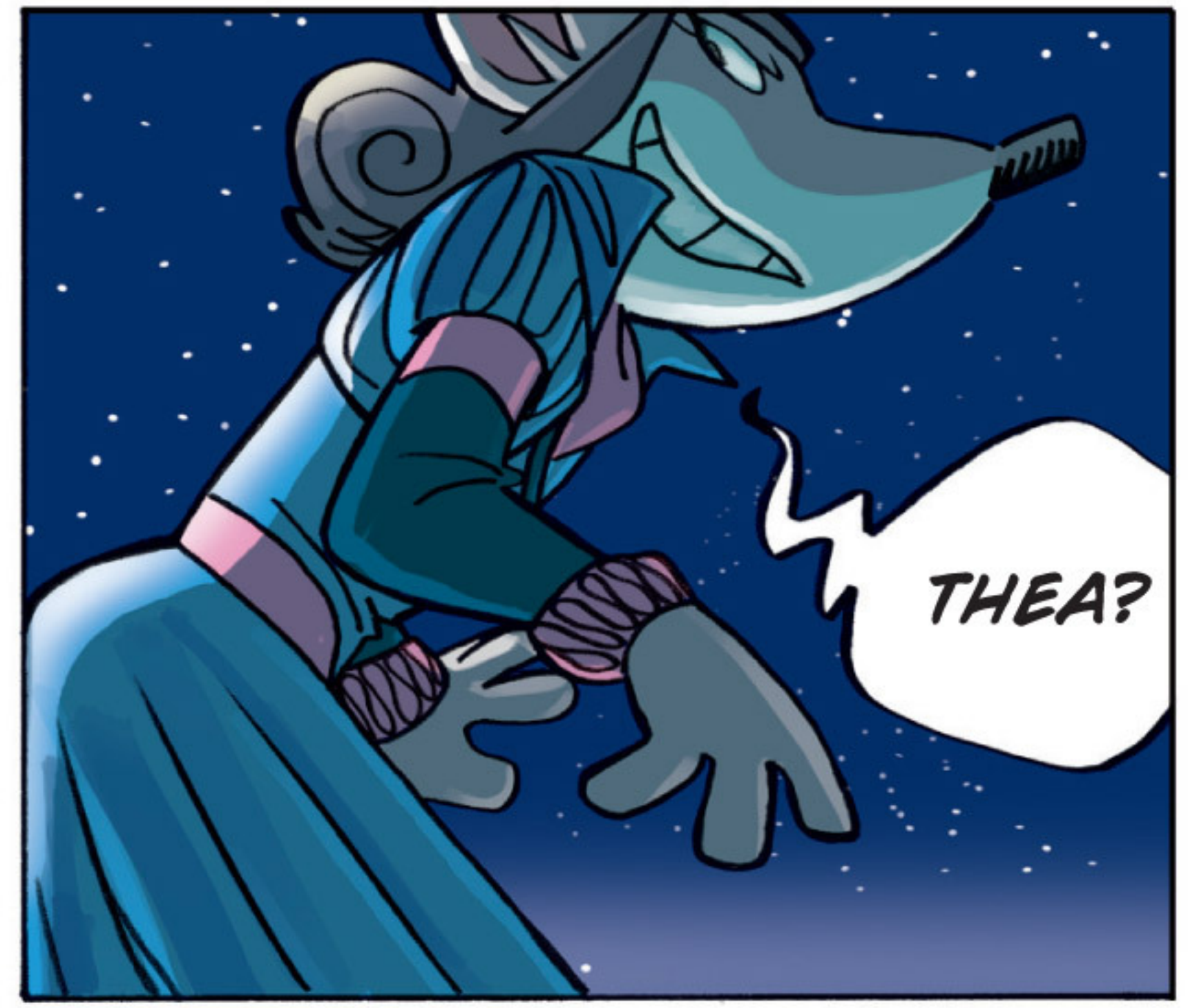
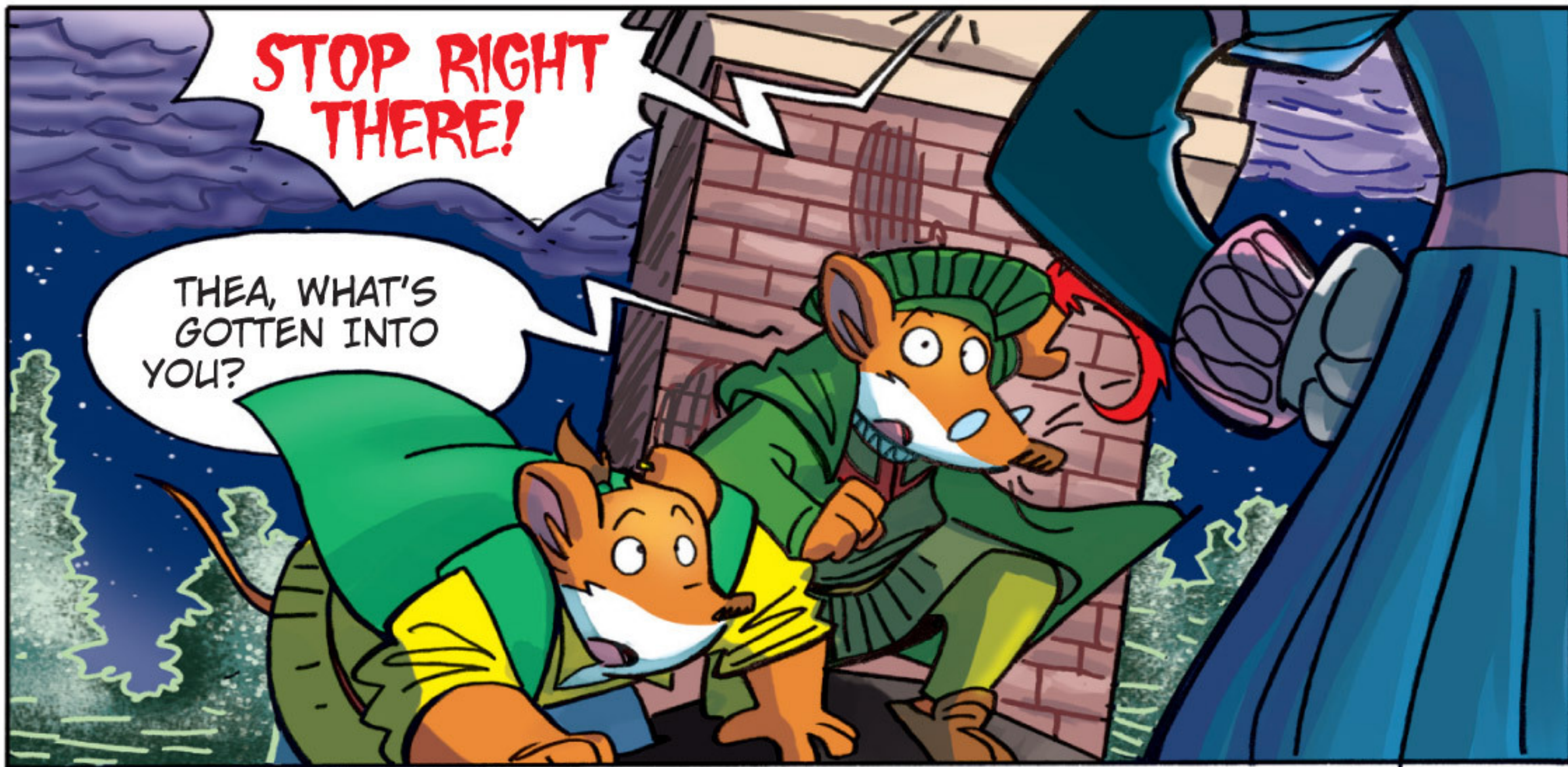
IT'S TIME
TO GO TO
SLEEP. MAYBE
WE'LL GET
SOME IDEAS
WHILE WE
DREAM!







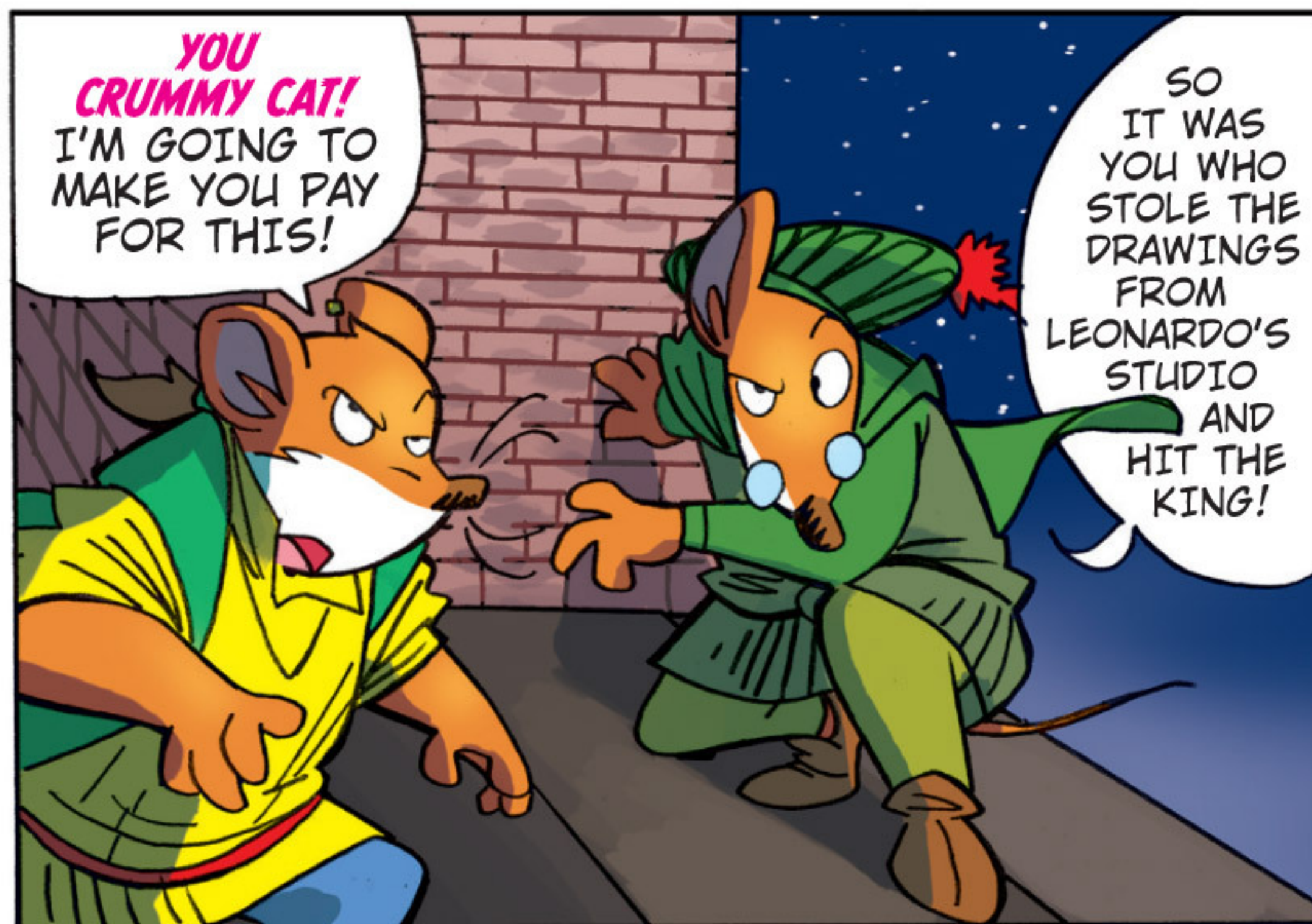






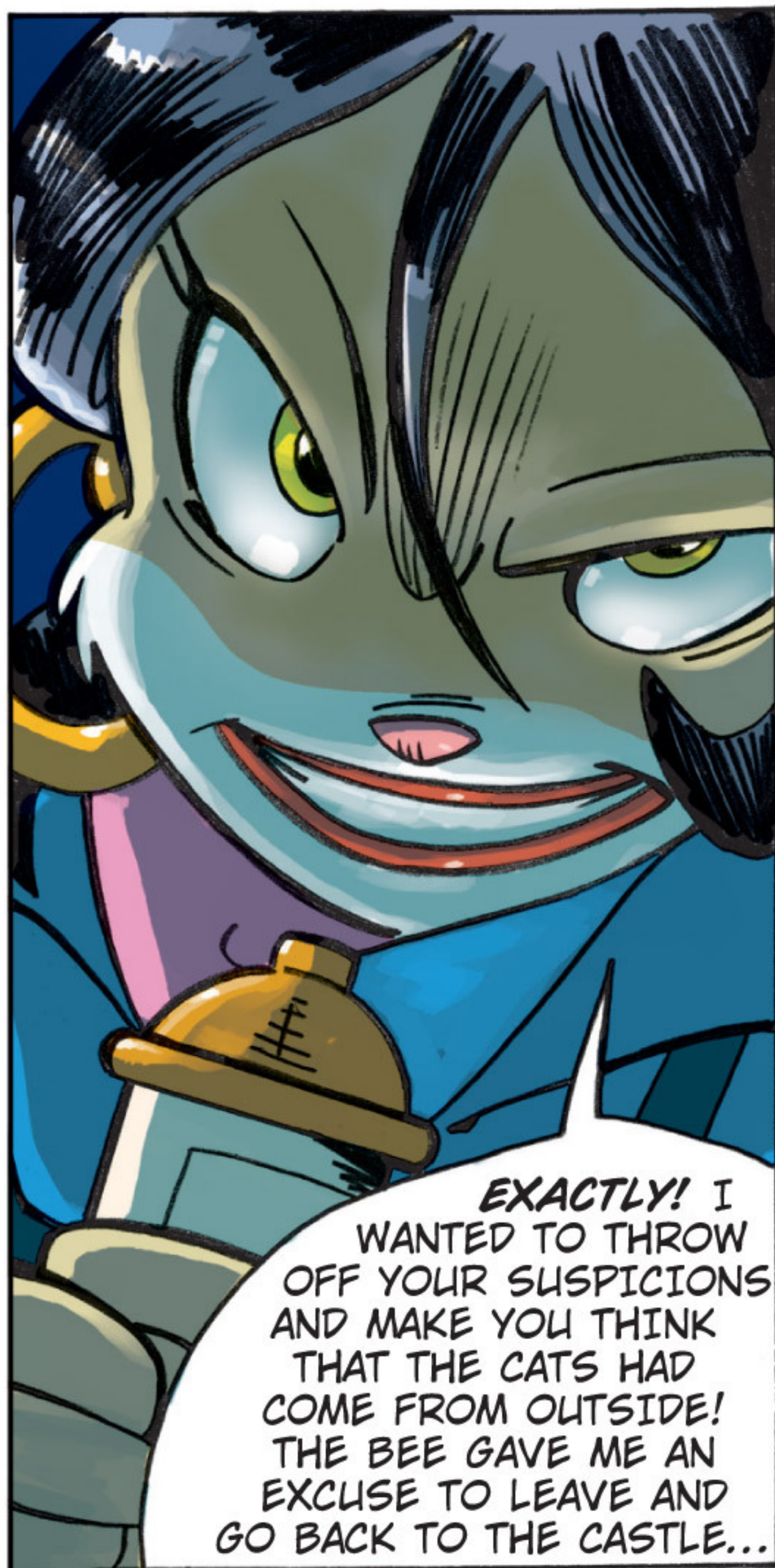
OBSVIOUSLY, TO DISCOVER HOW YOU FIND OUT ABOUT OUR TIME TRAVELS--AND TO KEEP YOU FROM ALWAYS MAKING OUR PLANS GO UP IN SMOKE!

NOW I KNOW ALL ABOUT PROFESSOR VON VOLT AND HIS TEMPO-GRAPH!



YOU CRUMMY CAT!
I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU PAY FOR THIS!

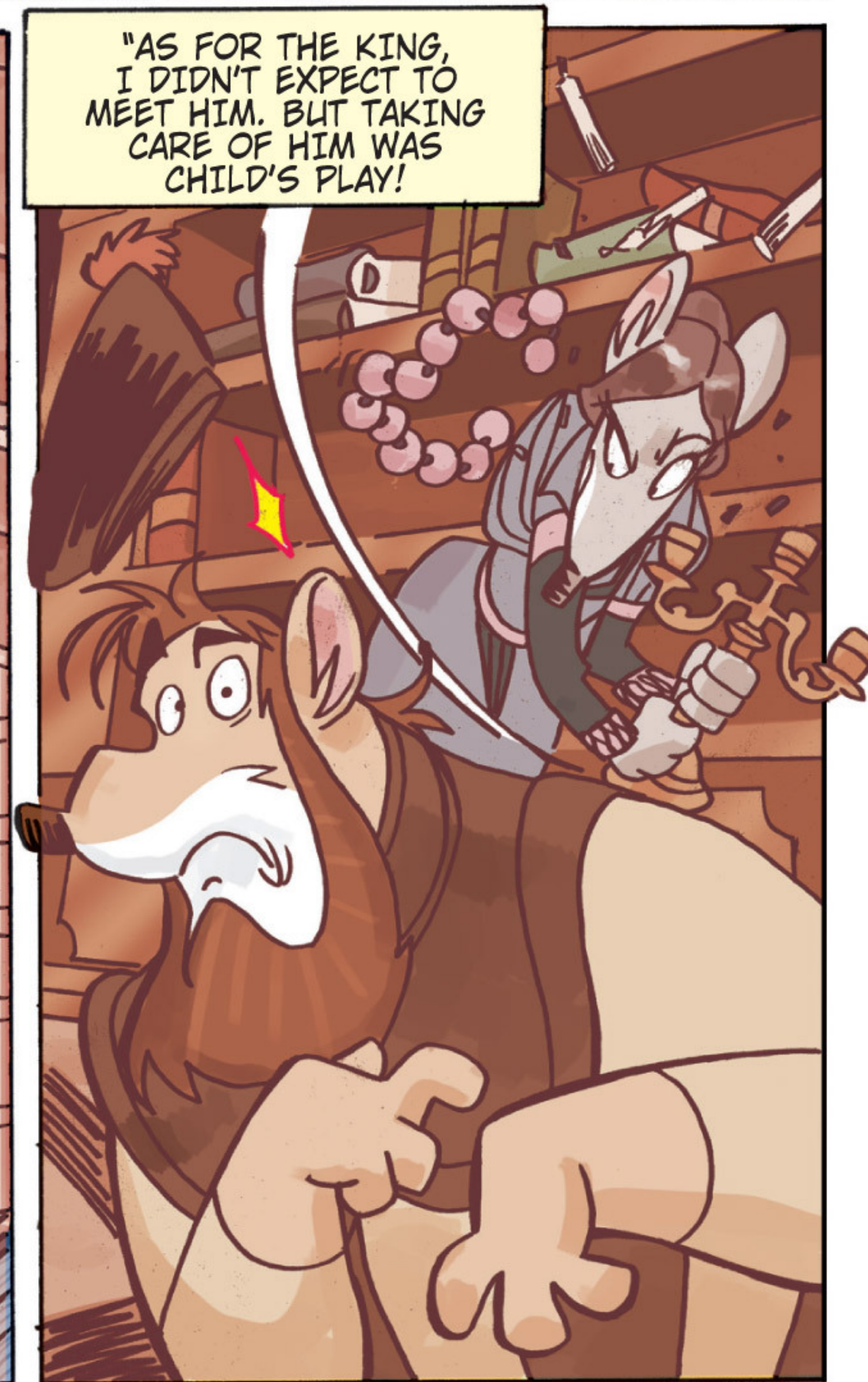
SO IT WAS YOU WHO STOLE THE DRAWINGS FROM LEONARDO'S STUDIO AND HIT THE KING!



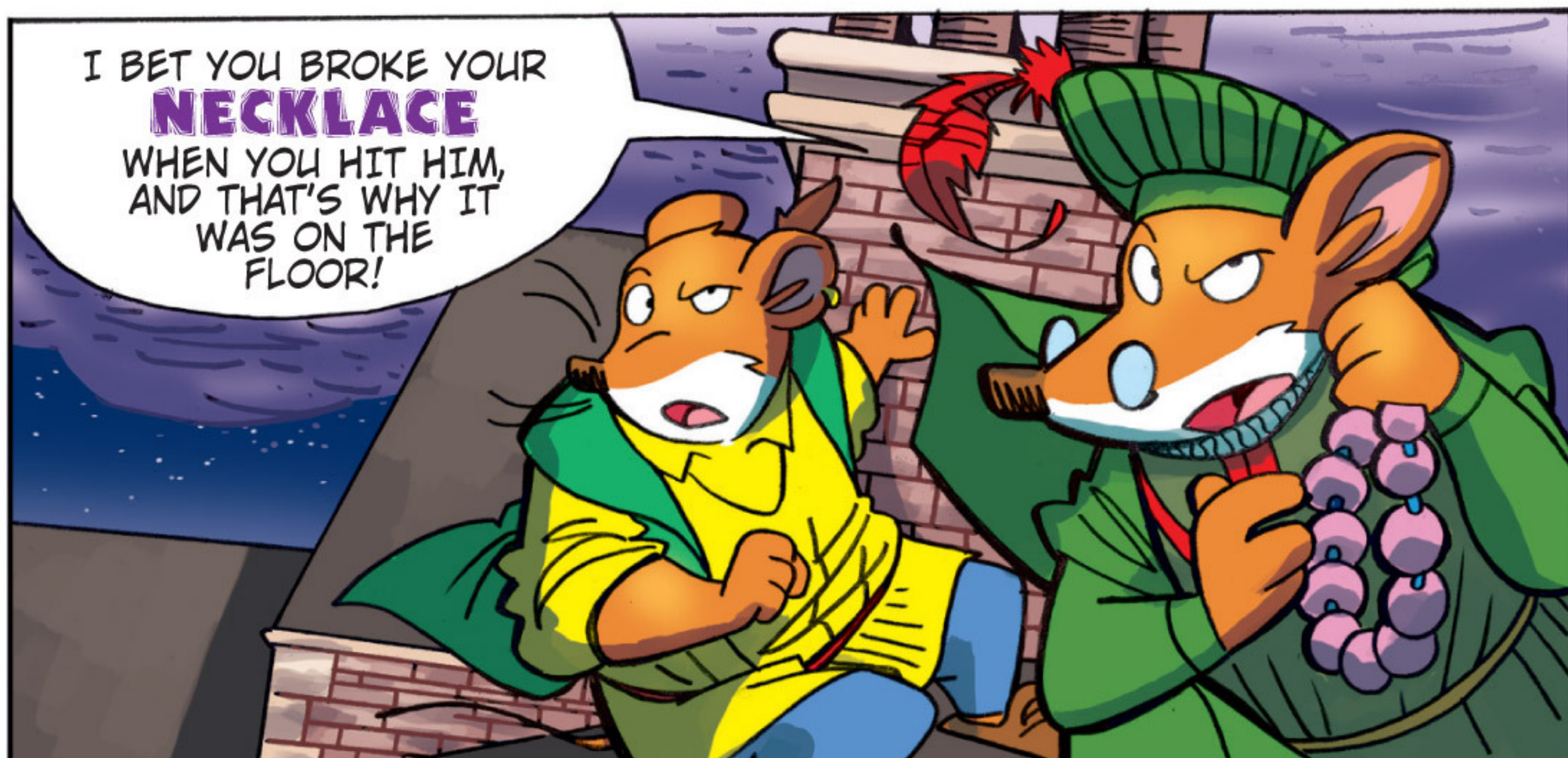
EXACTLY! I WANTED TO THROW OFF YOUR SUSPICIONS AND MAKE YOU THINK THAT THE CATS HAD COME FROM OUTSIDE! THE BEE GAVE ME AN EXCUSE TO LEAVE AND GO BACK TO THE CASTLE...



"THE INVESTIGATION WOULD HAVE CONTINUED AND WE PIRATE CATS WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OPERATE WITHOUT BEING DISTURBED... AND KIDNAP LEONARDO!"



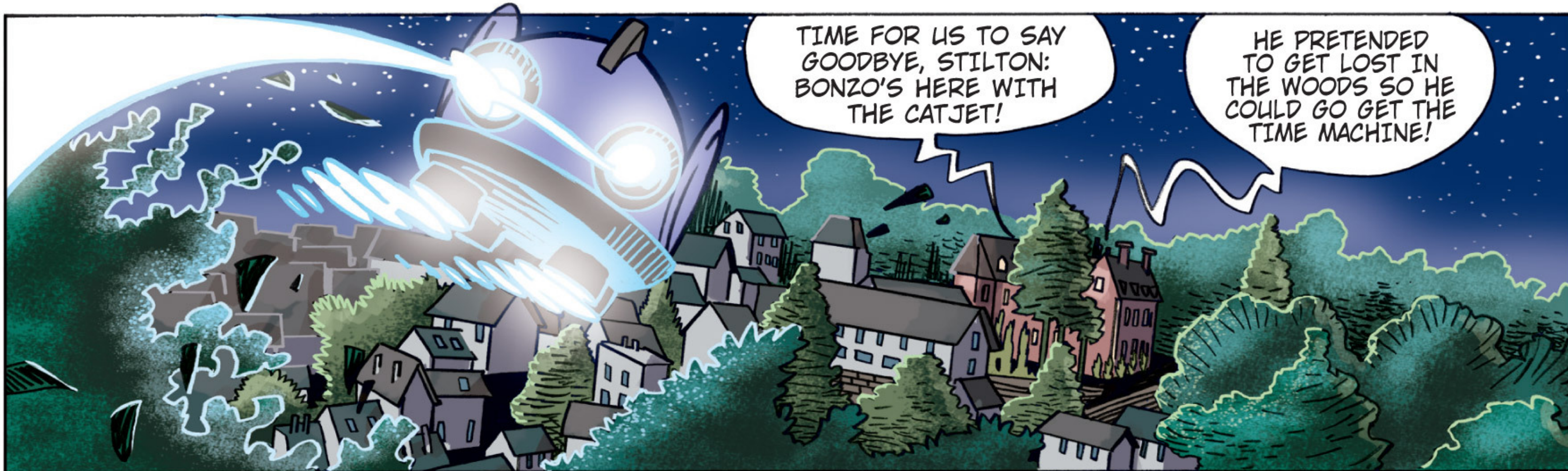
"AS FOR THE KING, I DIDN'T EXPECT TO MEET HIM. BUT TAKING CARE OF HIM WAS CHILD'S PLAY!"

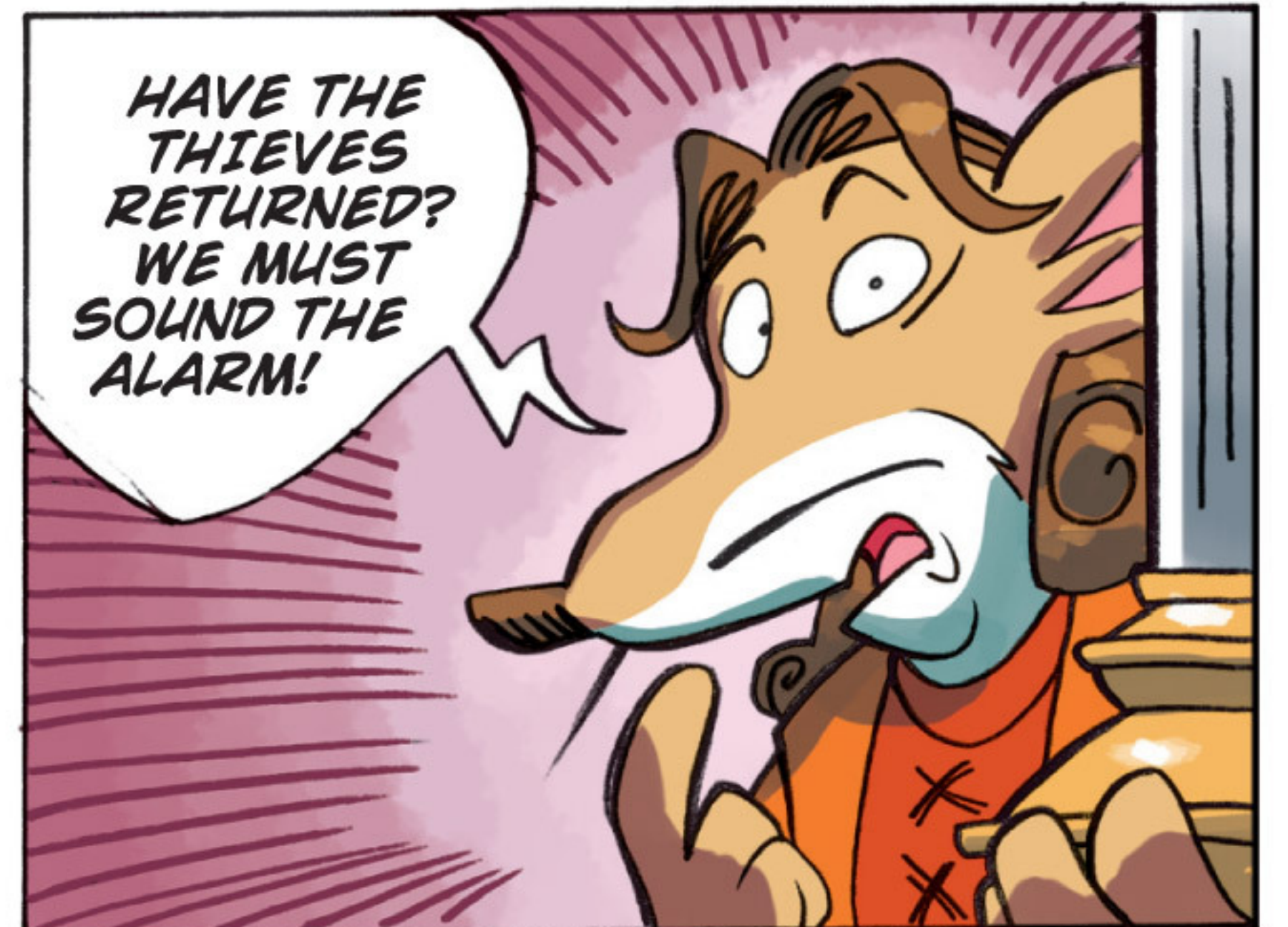


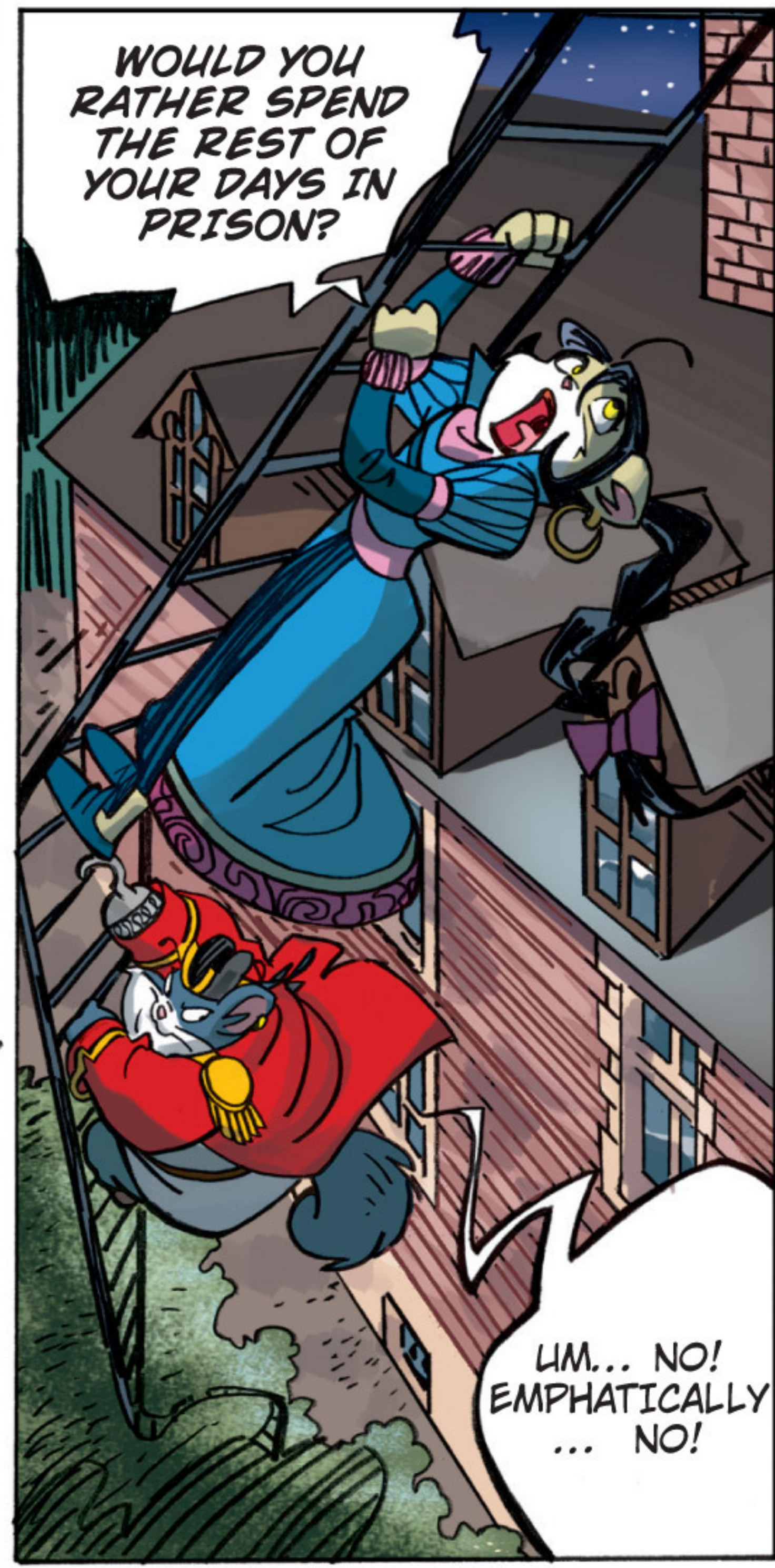
I BET YOU BROKE YOUR **NECKLACE** WHEN YOU HIT HIM, AND THAT'S WHY IT WAS ON THE FLOOR!



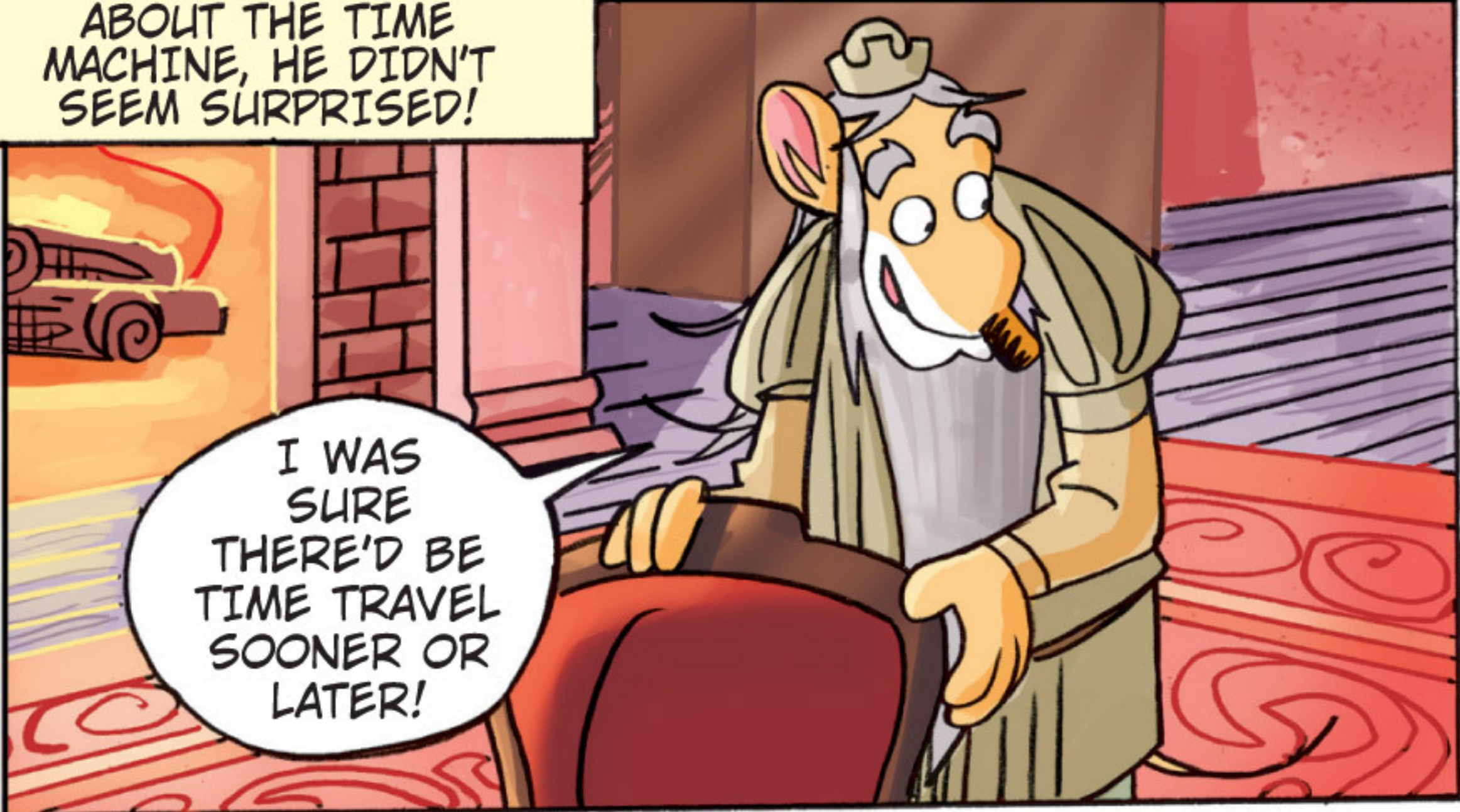
HUH? IT LOOKS LIKE I MADE A MISTAKE! I WAS IN SUCH A HURRY THAT I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE I'D LOST IT!



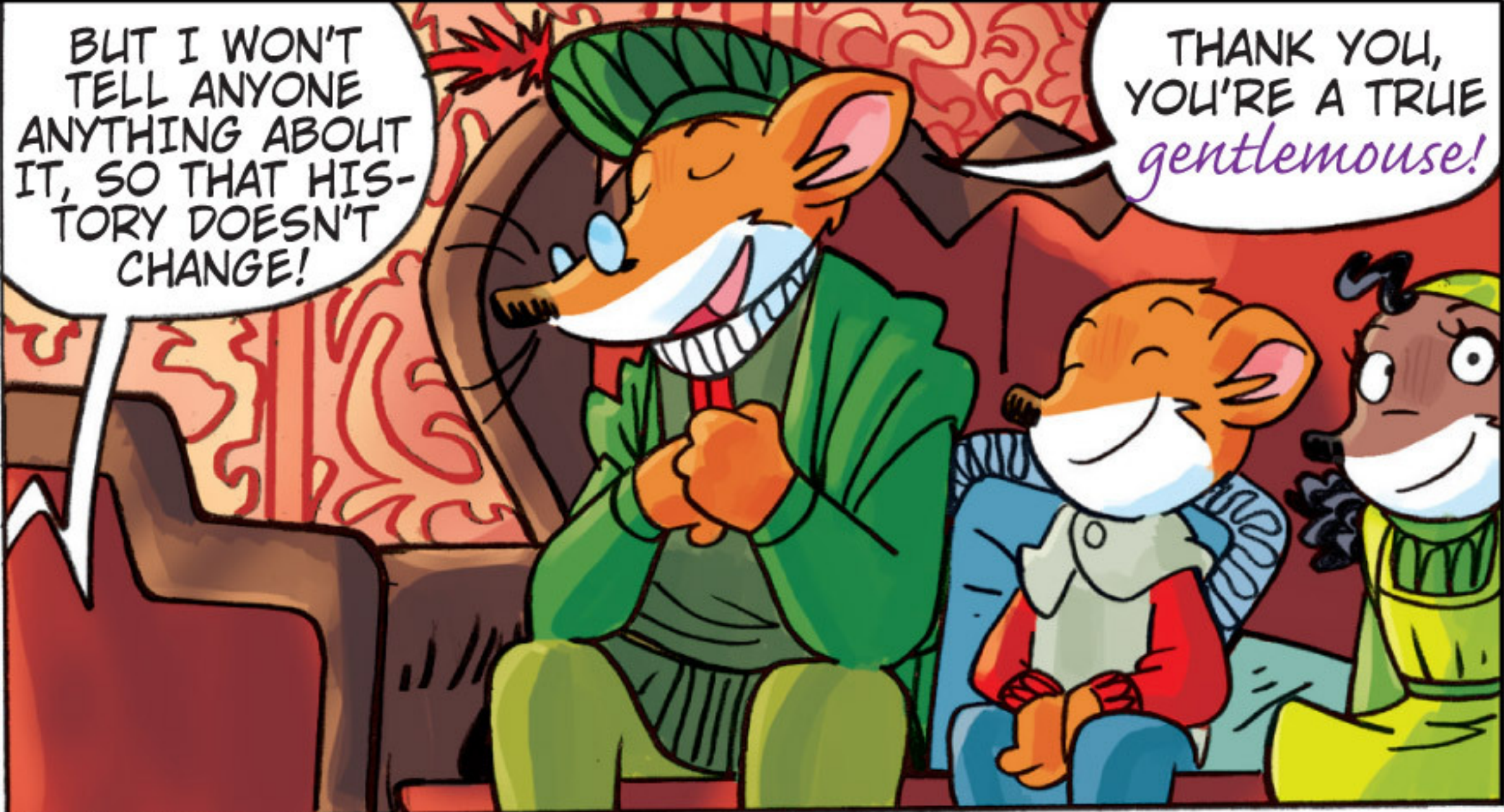




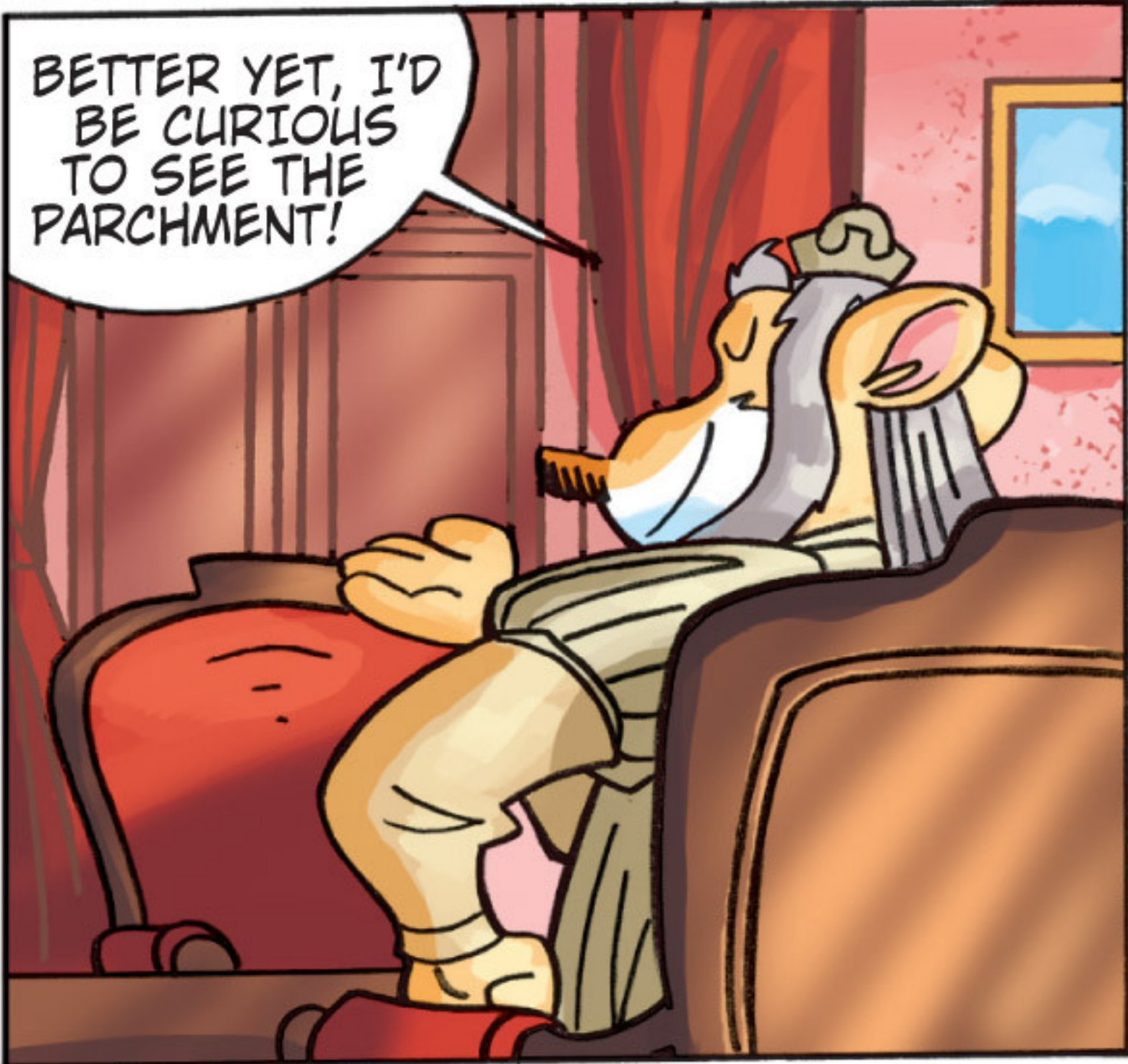
WHEN WE TOLD HIM ABOUT THE TIME MACHINE, HE DIDN'T SEEM SURPRISED!



BUT I WON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT IT, SO THAT HISTORY DOESN'T CHANGE!



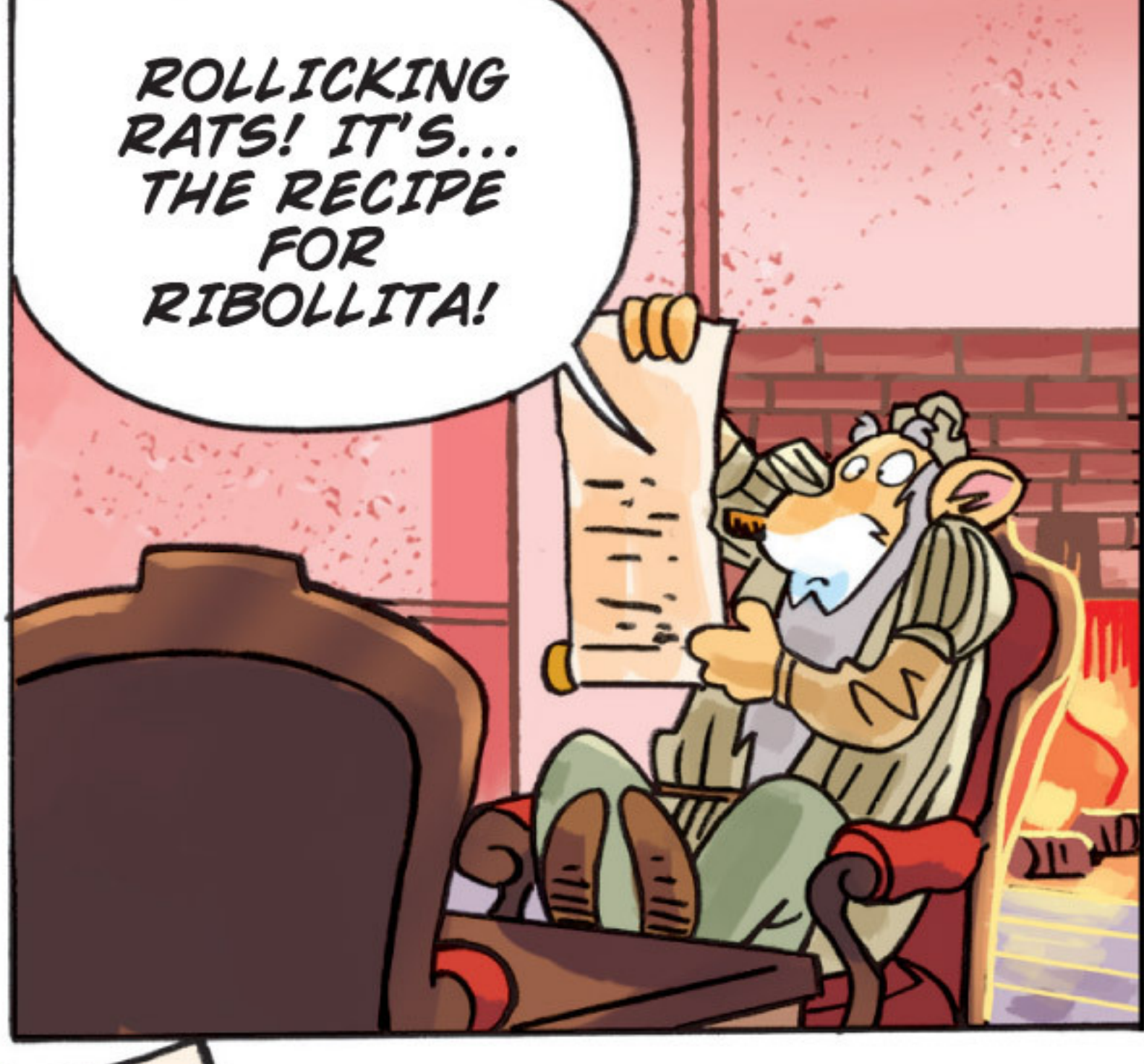
BETTER YET, I'D BE CURIOUS TO SEE THE PARCHMENT!



HERE IT IS! IT FELL FROM THE ROOF!



ROLICKING RATS! IT'S... THE RECIPE FOR RIBOLLITA!



RIBOLLITA?!?



SJCPMMJUB

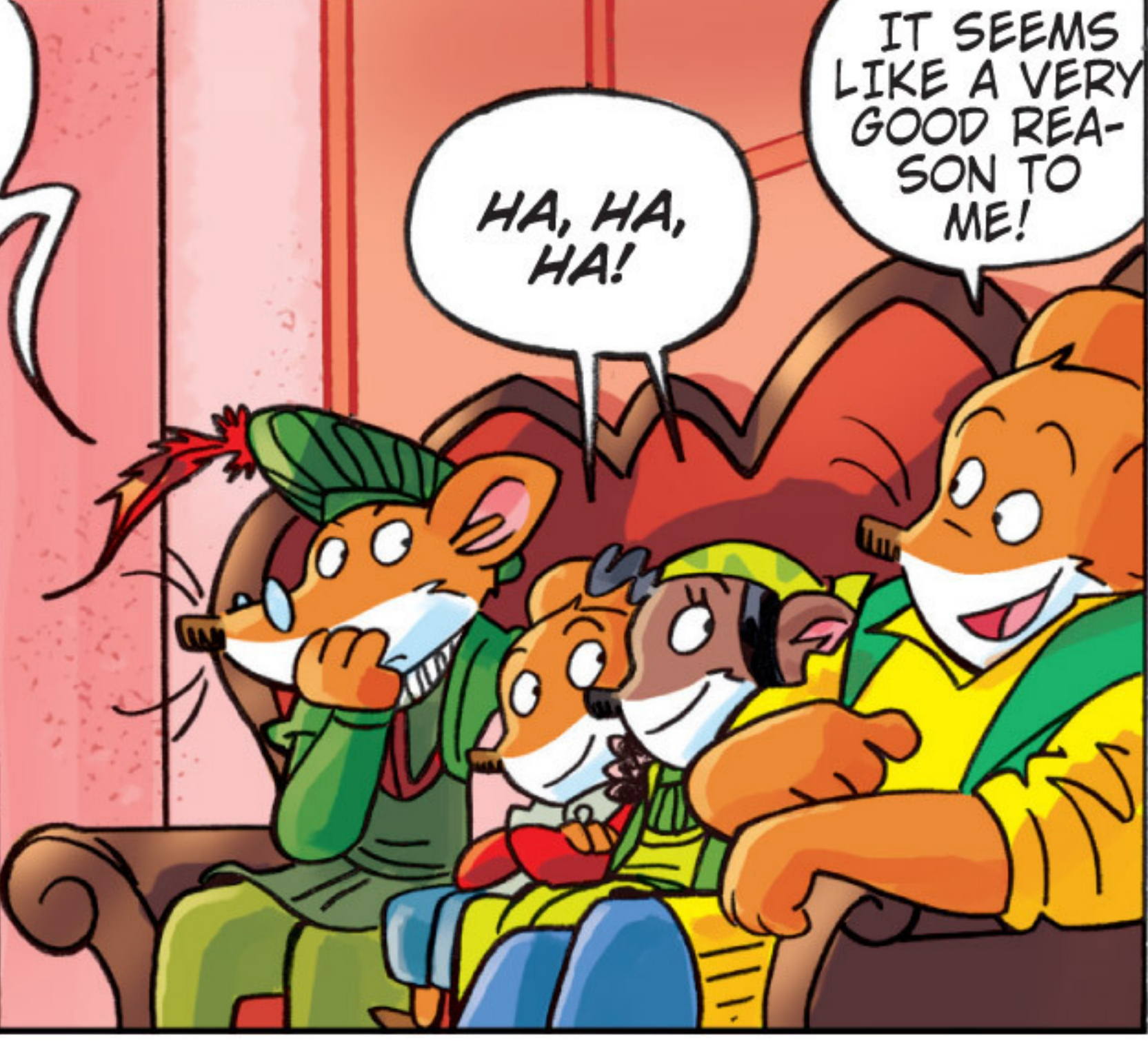


IT MUST BE A JOKE FROM SOME PRANKSTER COOK! IT'S WRITTEN IN A CODE WHERE EACH LETTER IN A WORD IS WRITTEN DOWN BY USING THE NEXT LETTER IN THE ALPHABET! LOOK, HERE'S THE CODE: R=S, I=J, B=C, O=P, L=M, L=M, I=J, T=U, A=B!

THOSE CATS WENT TO ALL THAT TROUBLE JUST FOR A BOWL OF SOUP?



HA, HA, HA!



IT SEEMS LIKE A VERY GOOD REASON TO ME!

RIBOLLITA

IS A TYPICAL TUSCAN SOUP. ITS INGREDIENTS ARE KALE, BEETS, SAVOY CABBAGE, LEEKS, ONIONS, CELERY, POTATOES, CARROTS, ZUCCHINI, TOMATOES, CANNELLINI BEANS, EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, SALT, PEPPER, AND BREAD. BOIL THE BEANS AND SAUTE THE ONIONS AND OTHER CHOPPED VEGETABLES IN THE OLIVE OIL. ADD THE BEANS, HALF OF WHICH HAVE BEEN PUT THROUGH A SIEVE AND THE OTHER HALF LEFT WHOLE. COOK OVER A SLOW FIRE FOR AROUND TWO HOURS. ADD THE SLICED BREAD, SALT, AND PEPPER AND SERVE WITH A DROP OF OLIVE OIL.



THE NEXT DAY, THE KING THREW A BIG PARTY IN OUR HONOR...

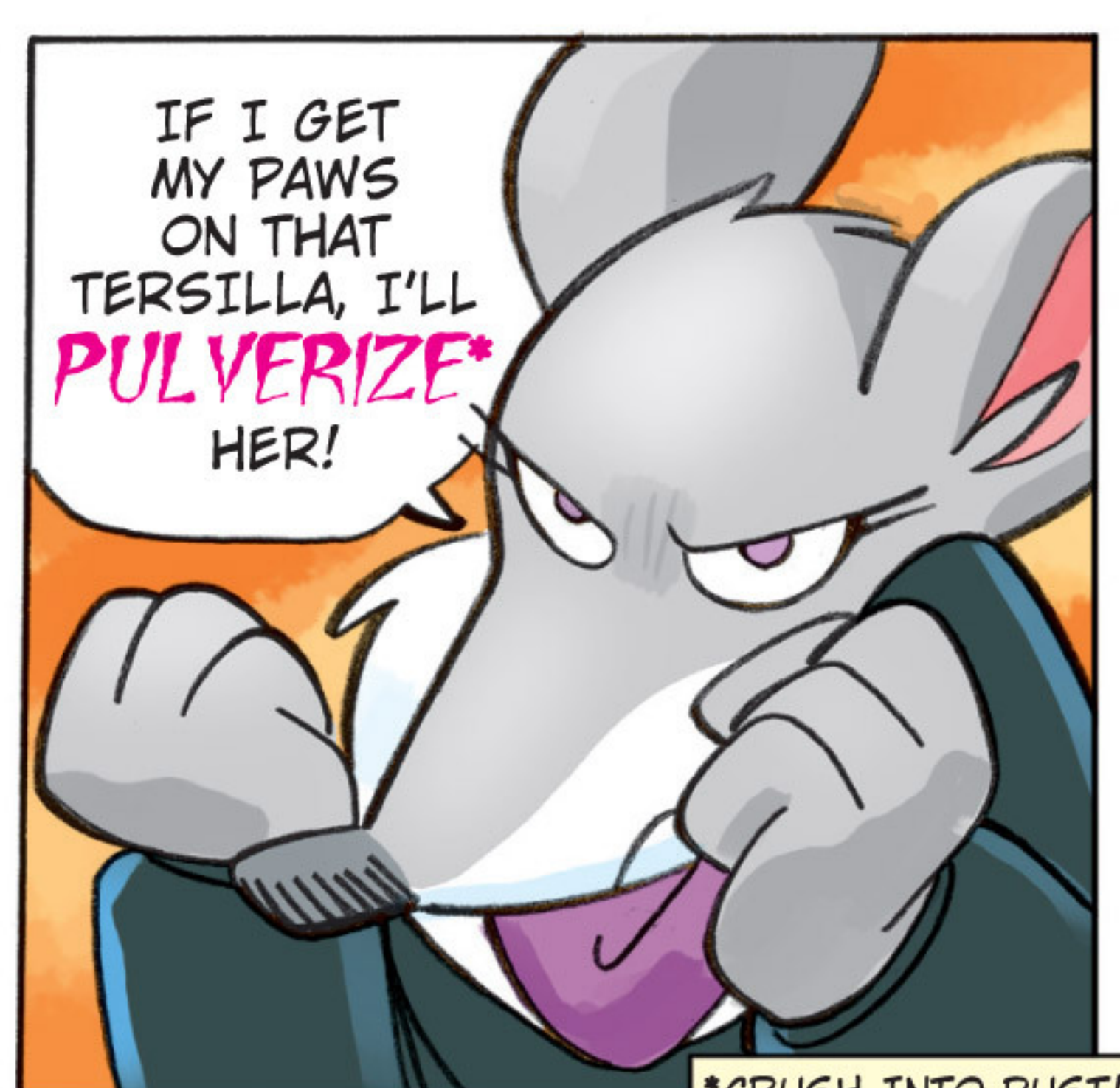
...THEN WE SAID GOODBYE TO OUR NEW FRIENDS AND HEADED OUT TO RETURN TO NEW MOUSE CITY!



WE WERE ALL WORRIED ABOUT THEA (AND THAT'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT!)

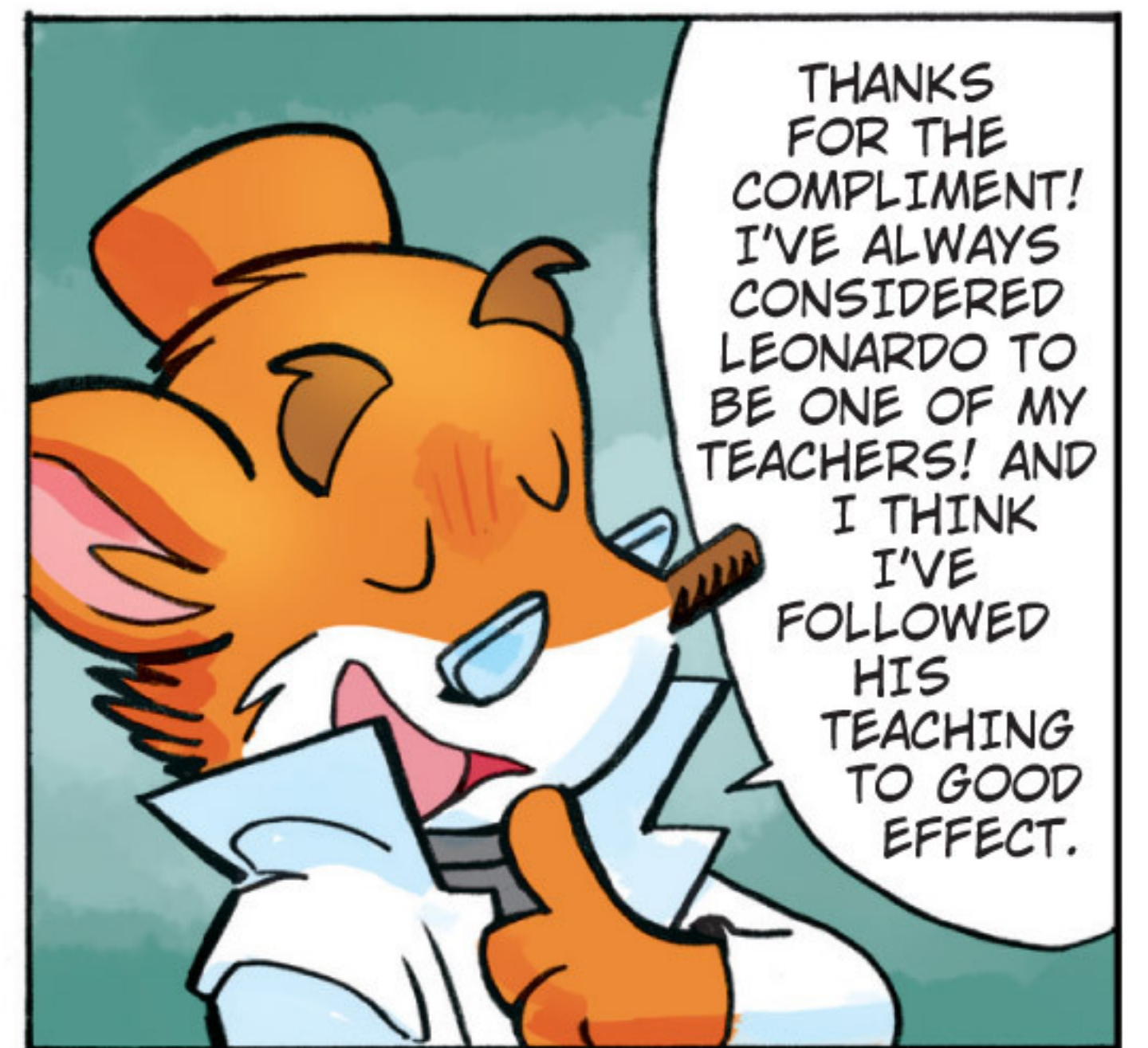
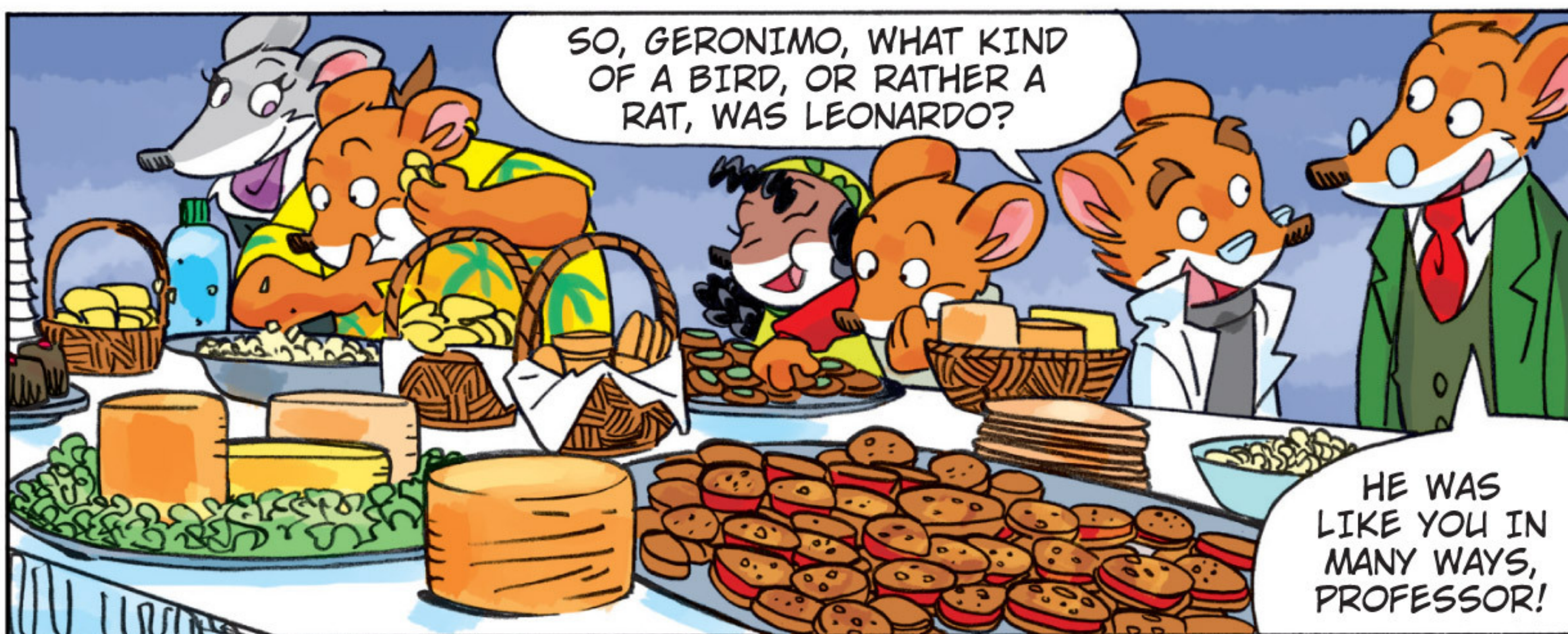
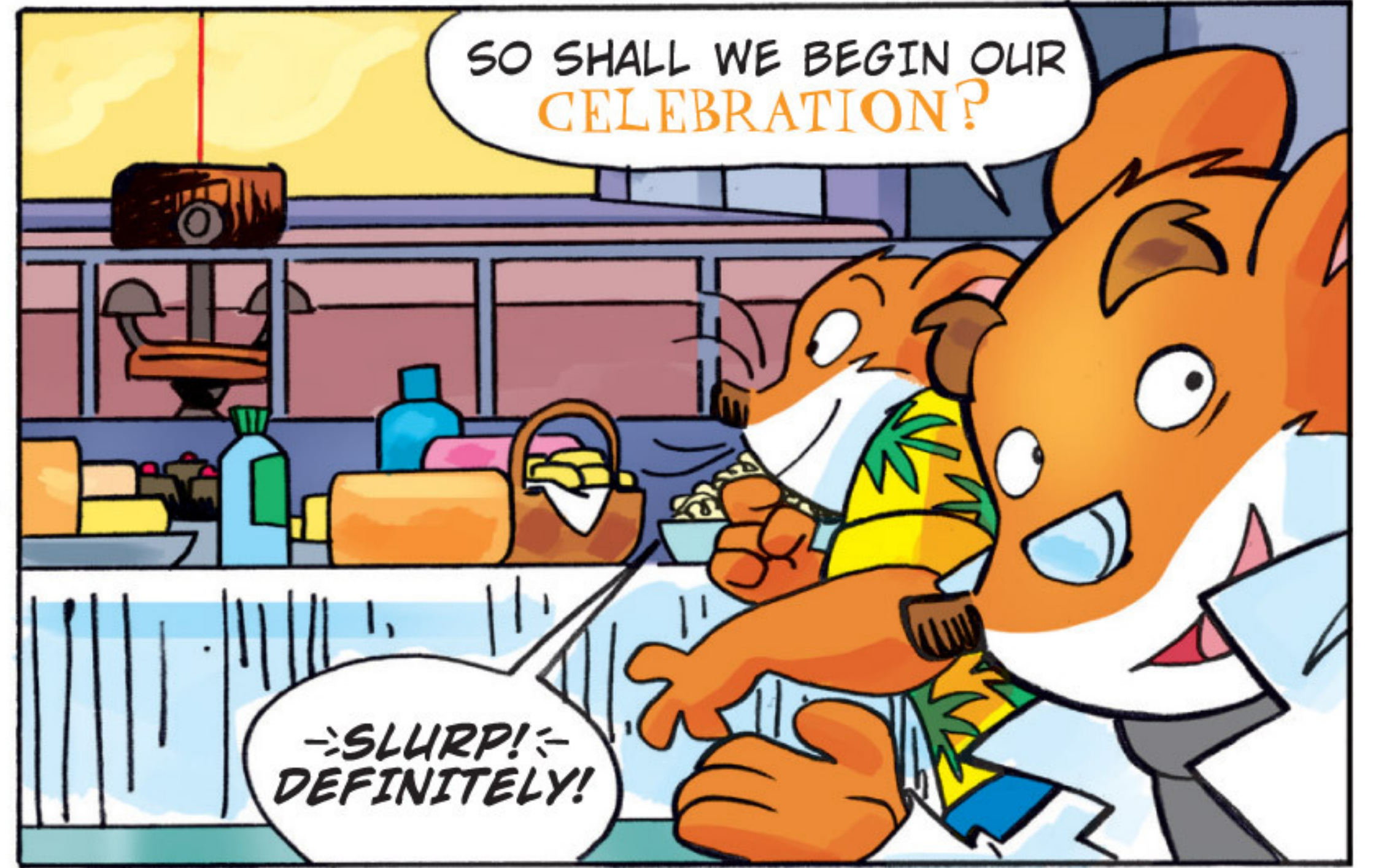
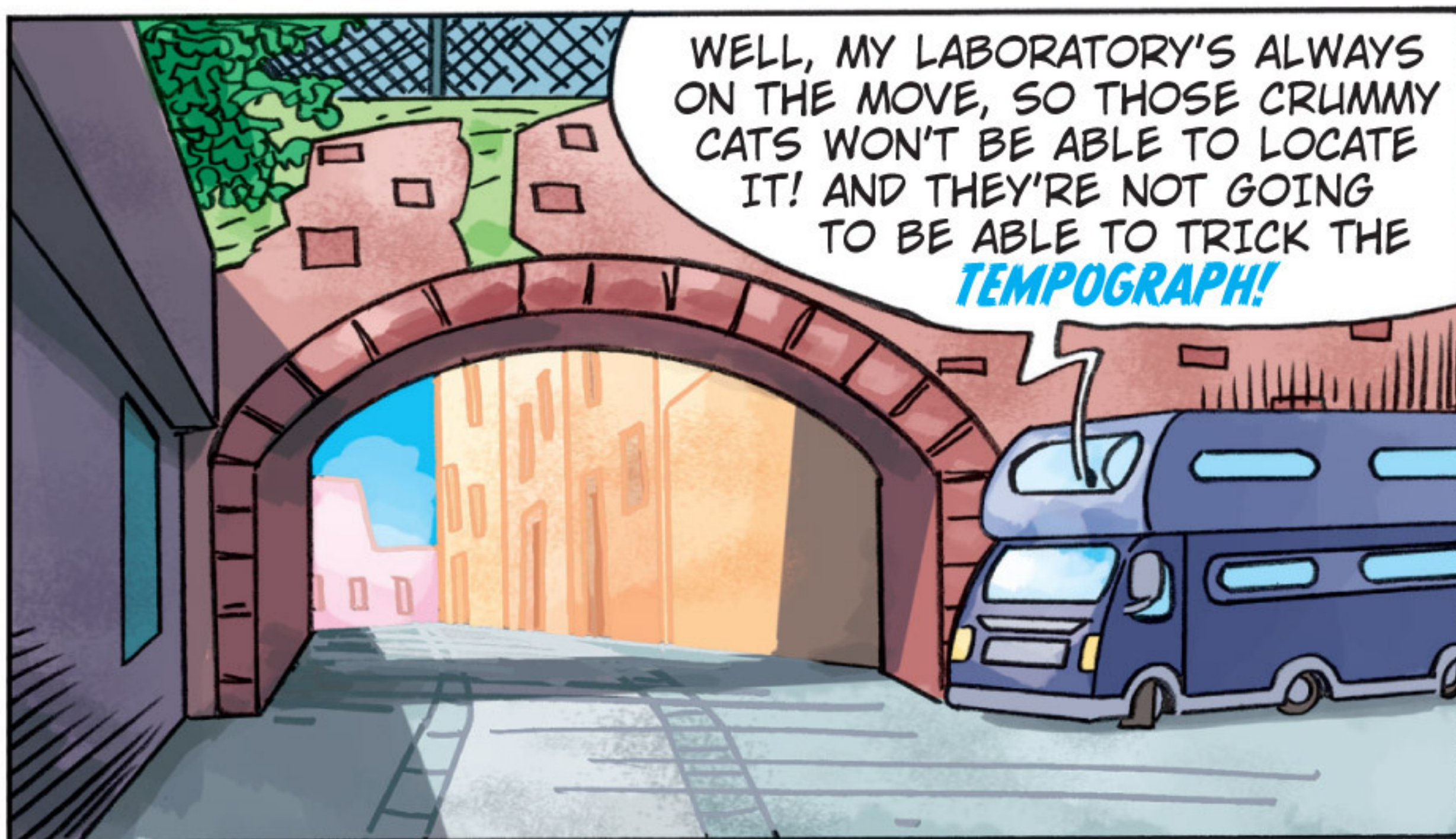
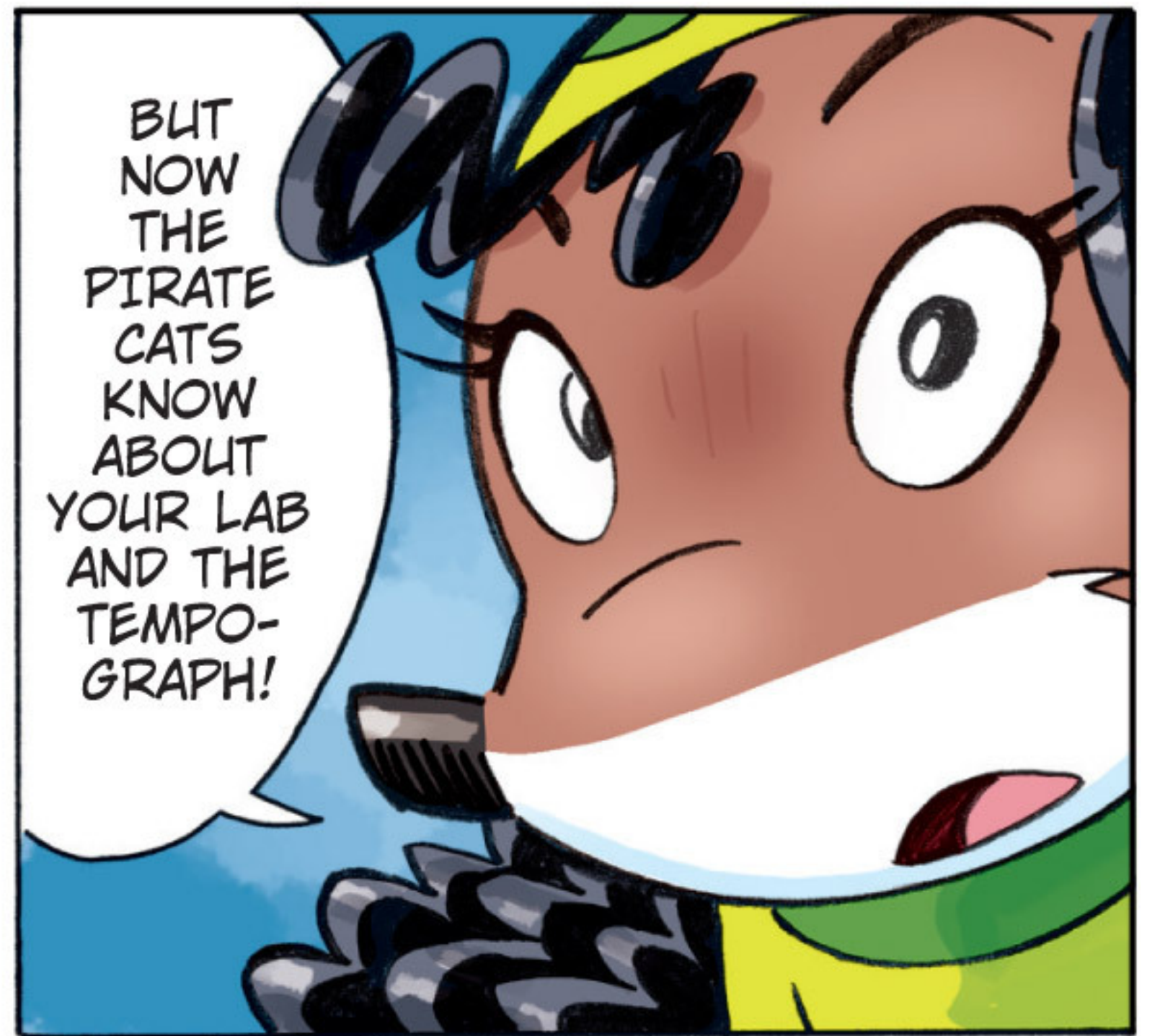


LUCKILY THEA WAS FINE... ALTHOUGH SHE WAS IN A BAD MOOD!



IF I GET MY PAWS ON THAT TERSILLA, I'LL **PULVERIZE*** HER!

*CRUSH INTO DUST!





Watch Out For PAPERCUTZ

On my way to the Papercutz offices every day, I usually pick up a newspaper. It's not the Rodent's Gazette, because I don't live in New Mouse City, it's the New York Post. With so much to do at Papercutz, I simply don't have the time to read the far more substantial New York Times or The Wall Street Journal. There are a couple of free newspapers, but they're a bit too skimpy. There's also The New York Daily News, which features the most comics, but the paper has grown quite stodgy over the years. Oh, wait—I forgot to introduce myself again! I'm Salicrup, *Jim Salicrup*, and I'm the Editor-in-Chief of Papercutz, the all-ages graphic novel publisher.

I'm curious—which is why I read a newspaper every day—do you read a daily newspaper? And if so, is it the printed edition or an online or digital version? Once upon a time almost everyone read a newspaper, but these days not so much. The question is—what happened? The reason I'm asking the question here in the pages of GERONIMO STILTON is that Geronimo is a newspaper editor. So many famous comicbook characters work in the newspaper field—Clark Kent, who is a mild-mannered reporter for The Daily Planet, a great metropolitan newspaper, and Peter Parker is a freelance photographer for The Daily Bugle. Newspapers have been the settings for such characters because it places the heroes right where the action is—reporters travel the world covering all the major news stories of the day! But sadly, newspapers are not doing so well these days. Circulation is heading down, not up, as many people turn to either television or the Internet for their news.

So, I'm asking you—yes, you—what do you think about all this? If you do read newspapers, please tell us why, and what you enjoy most. If you don't, we'd like to know why—are they too boring? Not covering things that interest you? Are they too hard to understand? What would you do, if you were a newspaper editor? How would you change the newspaper to make it appeal more to younger people? Do you think newspapers should go the way of the dinosaurs and just quietly fade into the past? Or do you think there's something newspapers could do that could make them part of your daily routine? Please email your answers to me at salicrup@papercutz.com or send it through the mail to Jim Salicrup, PAPERCUTZ, 40 Exchange Place, Suite 1308, New York, NY 10005. Oh, and be sure to also let me know what you think of our GERONIMO STILTON graphic novels! Even if you don't care about newspapers—we want to know what you think about Geronimo!

Also, don't forget to visit www.papercutz.com! There's a lot of new and exciting Papercutz graphic novels heading your way soon, and I'm sure you won't want to miss it! Everything from HARRY POTTY to THE SMURFS! And don't miss GERONIMO STILTON Graphic Novel #7 "Dinosaurs in Action"! There's a short preview starting on the very next page...

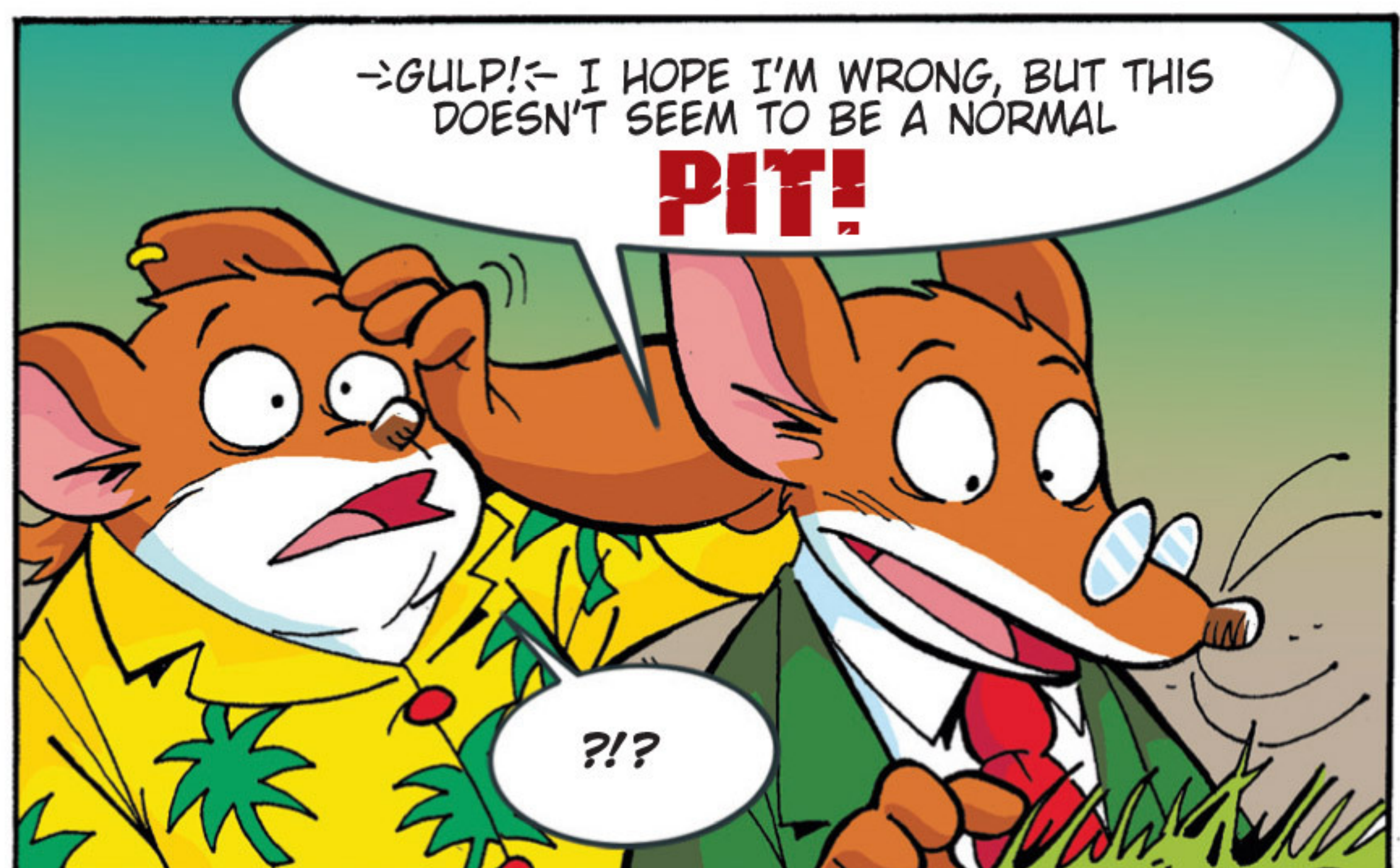
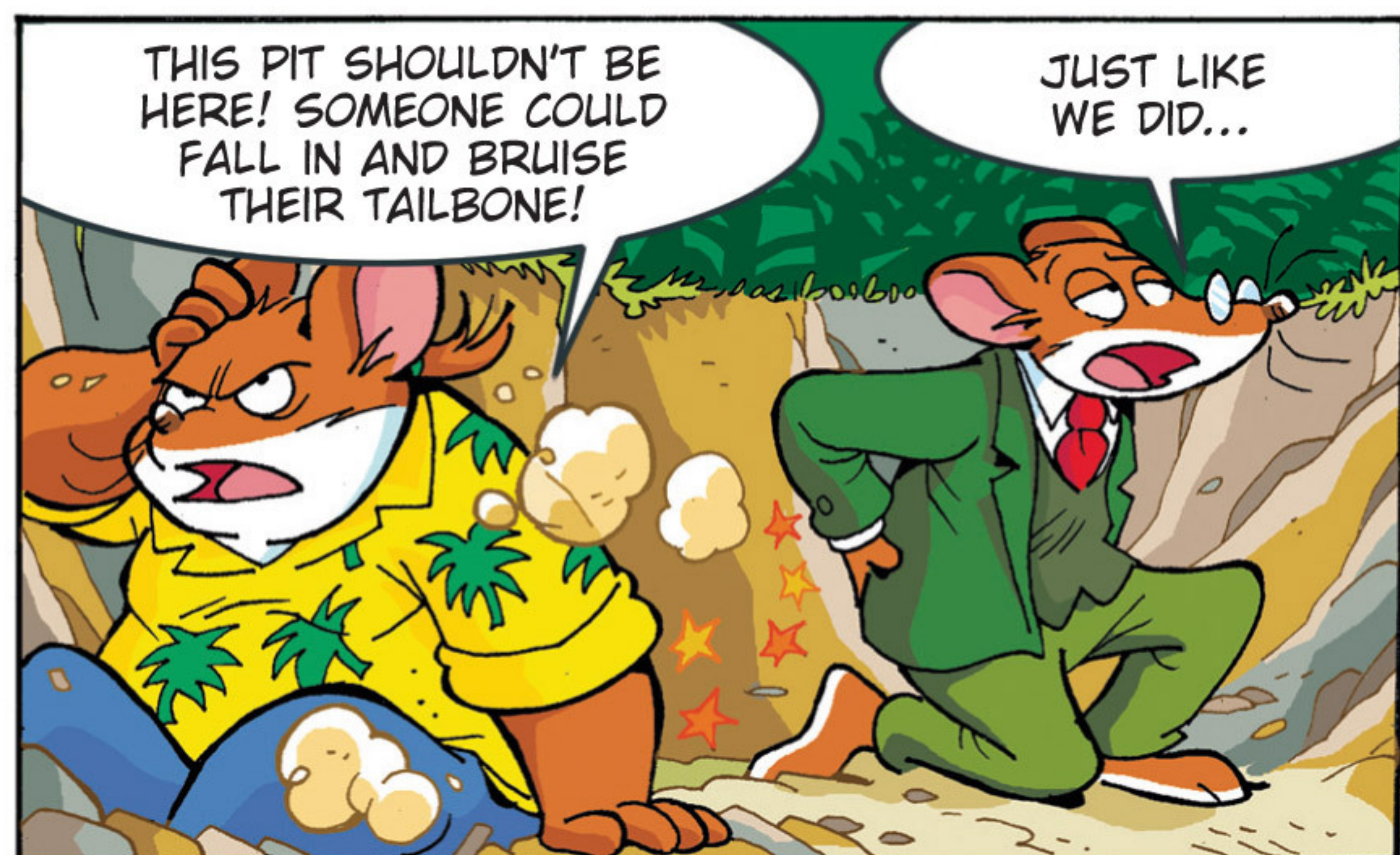
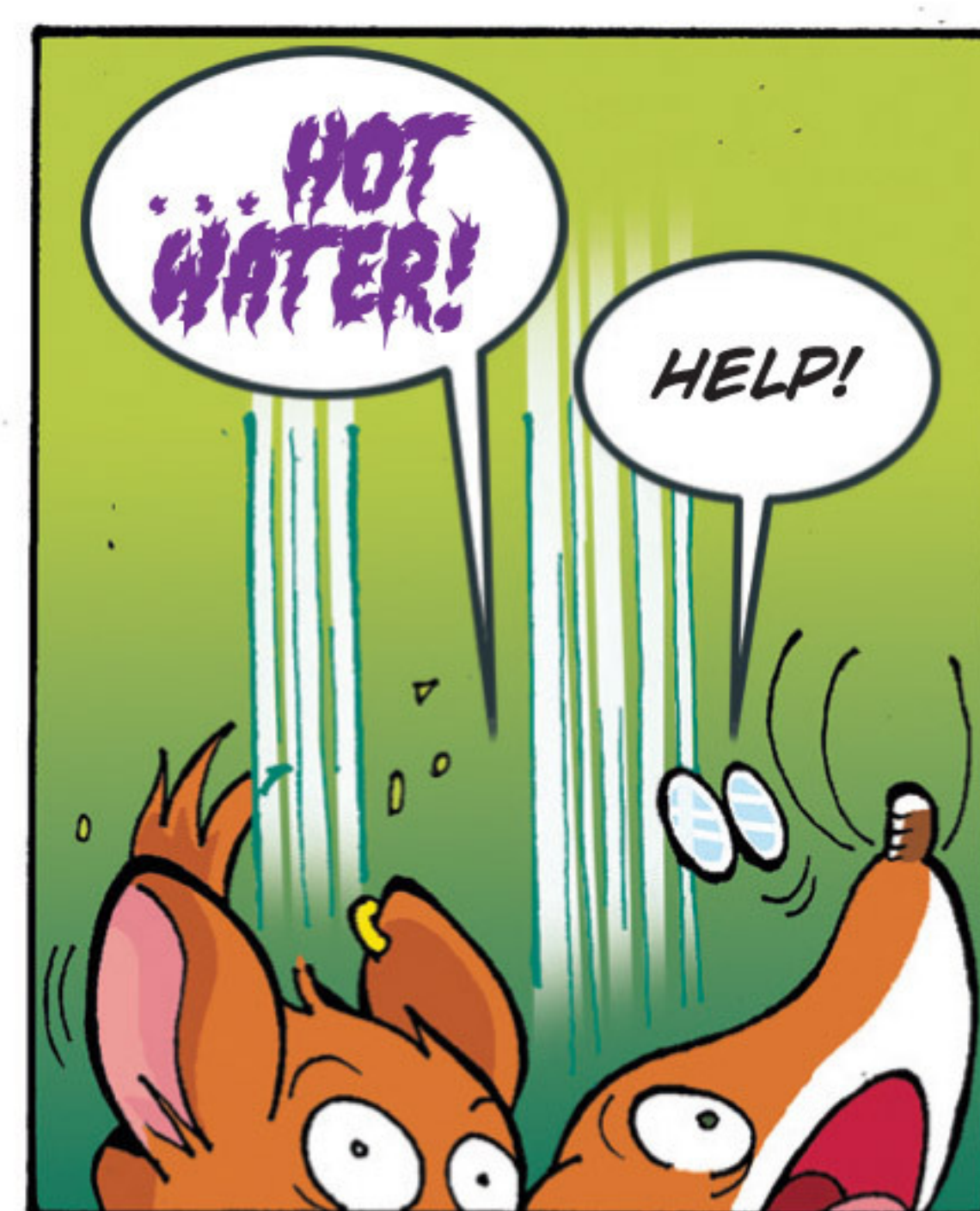
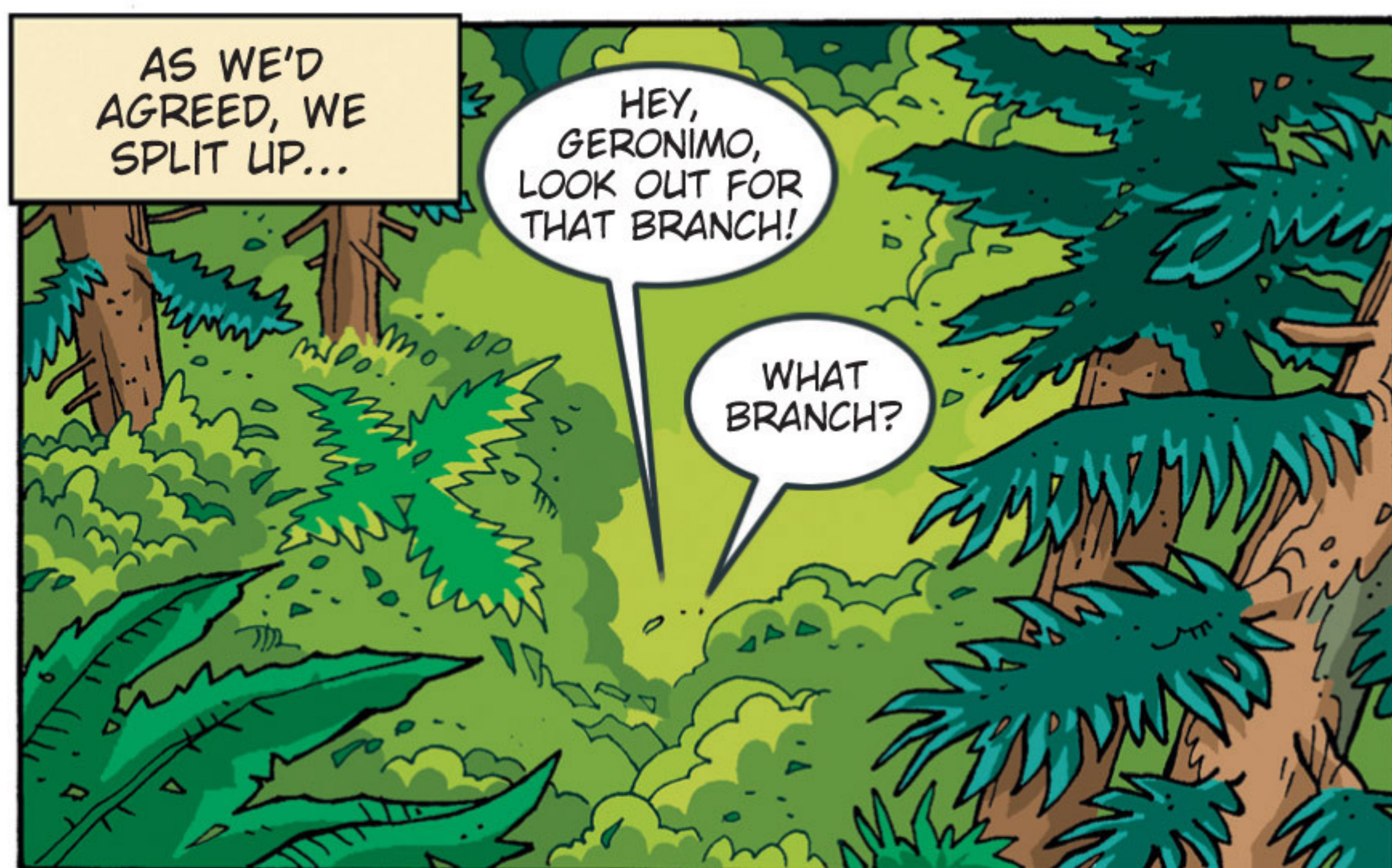
So, until next time, try not to go back in time for any selfish or devious reasons, Geronimo already has his hands full saving the future, by protecting the past, without you starting trouble!

Thanks,

Jim



Special Preview of GERONIMO STILTON Graphic Novel #7 – “Dinosaurs in Action”!



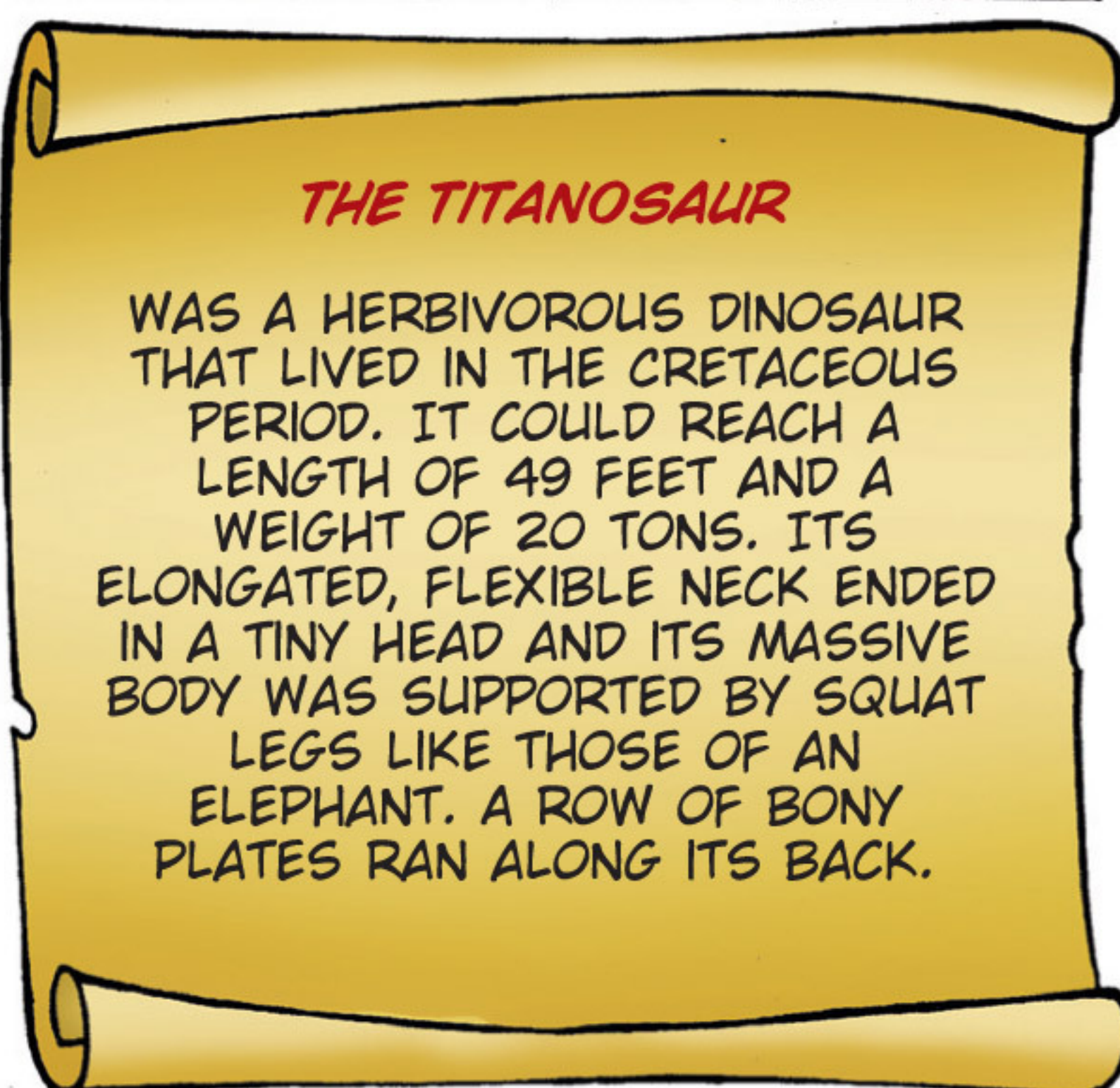


LOOK! WE
FELL RIGHT
INTO THE TRACK
OF A DINOSAUR!

—GULP!—
YOU'RE RIGHT...
IT'S REALLY
HUGE!

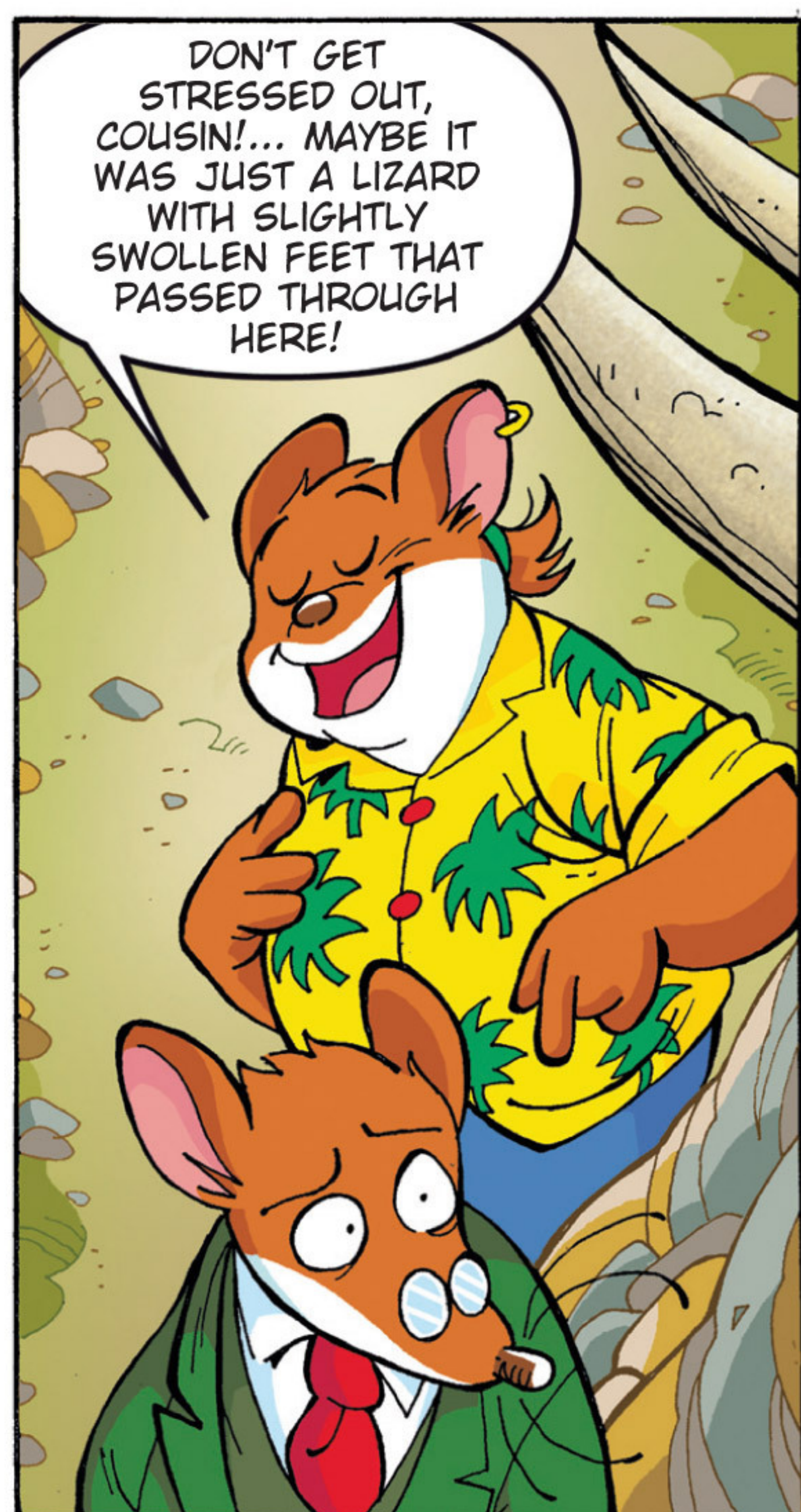


IT'S GOT TO BE A TITANOSAUR! I
READ SOMEWHERE THAT IT'S ONE
OF THE BIGGEST TERRESTRIAL
DINOSAURS THAT EVER EXISTED!



THE TITANOSAUR

WAS A HERBIVOROUS DINOSAUR
THAT LIVED IN THE CRETACEOUS
PERIOD. IT COULD REACH A
LENGTH OF 49 FEET AND A
WEIGHT OF 20 TONS. ITS
ELONGATED, FLEXIBLE NECK ENDED
IN A TINY HEAD AND ITS MASSIVE
BODY WAS SUPPORTED BY SQUAT
LEGS LIKE THOSE OF AN
ELEPHANT. A ROW OF BONY
PLATES RAN ALONG ITS BACK.



DON'T GET
STRESSED OUT,
COUSIN!... MAYBE IT
WAS JUST A LIZARD
WITH SLIGHTLY
SWOLLEN FEET THAT
PASSED THROUGH
HERE!



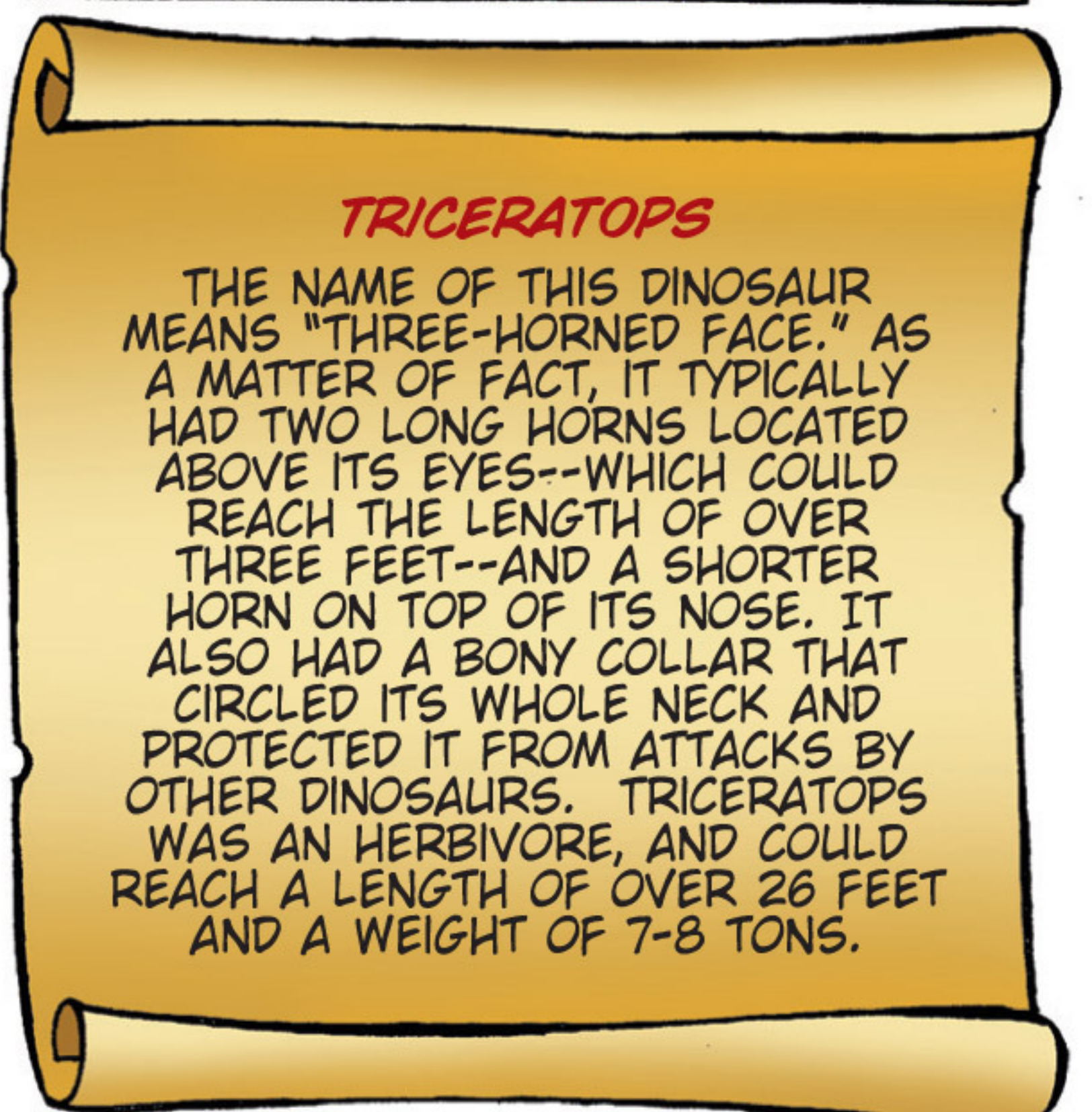
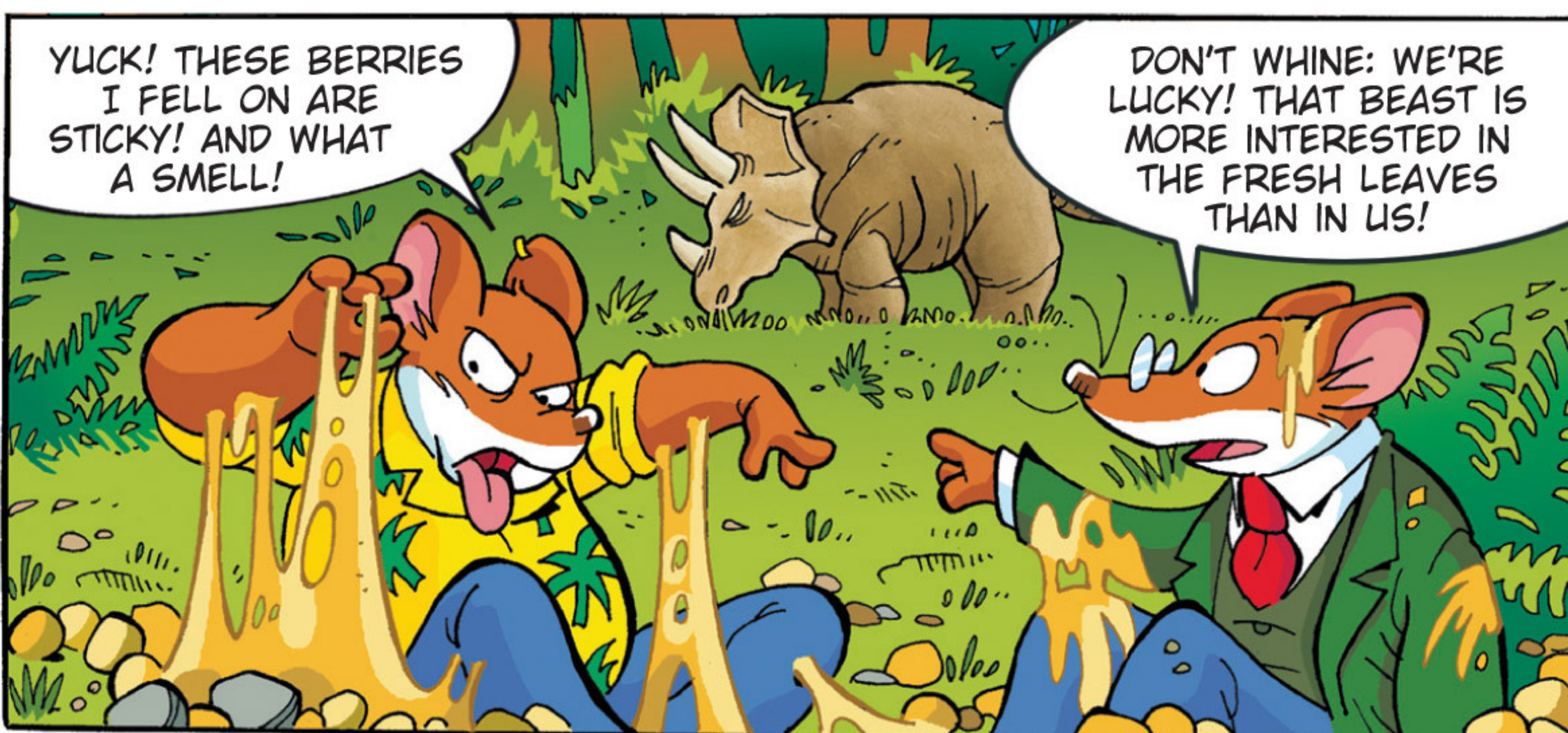
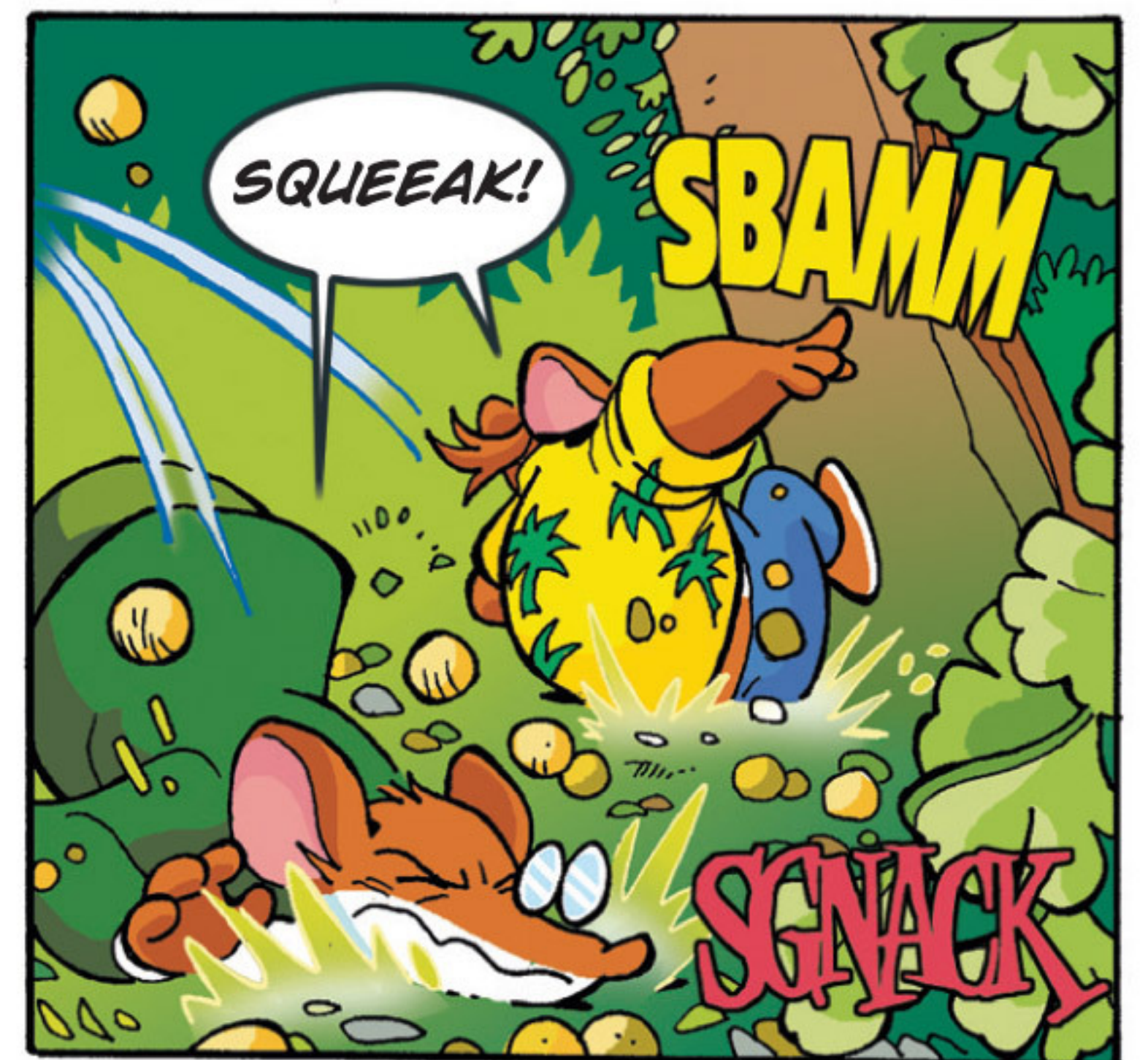
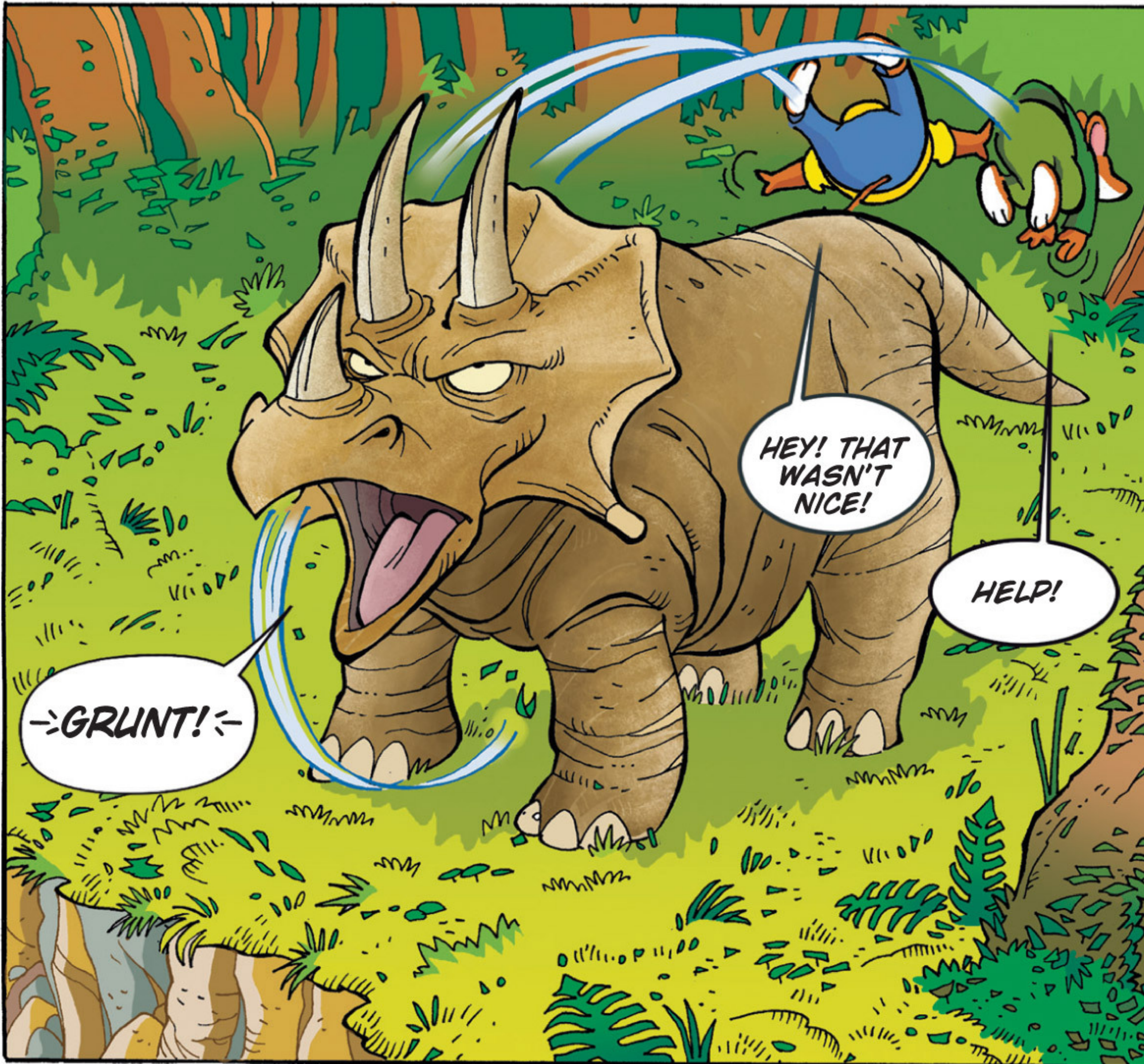
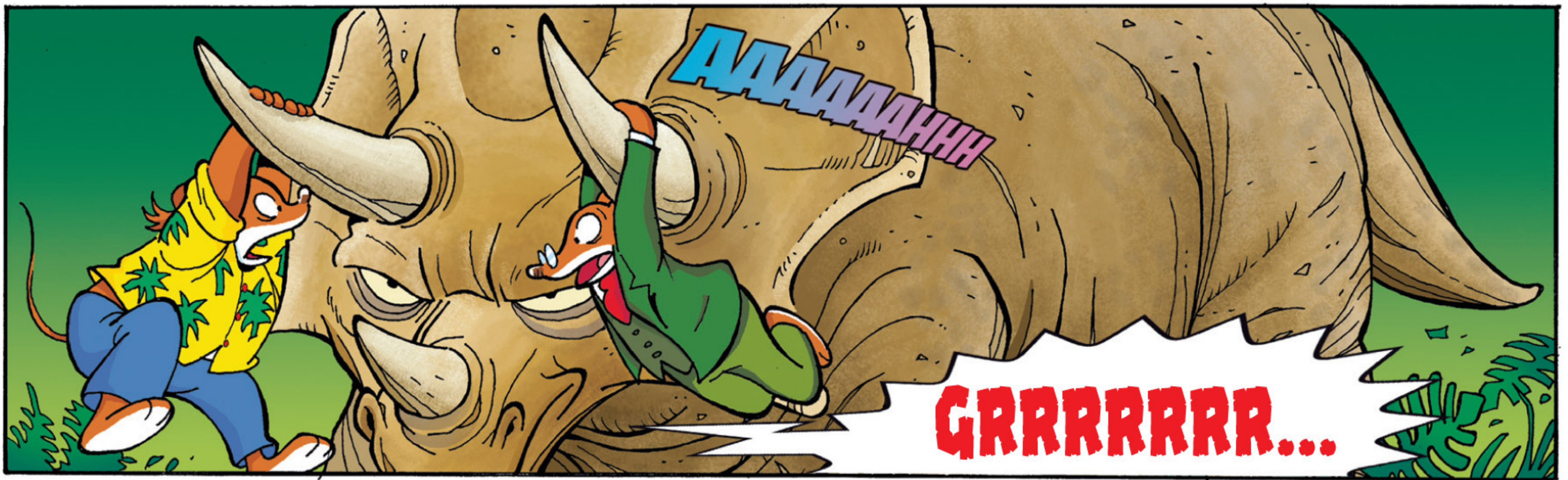
LET'S GRAB ONTO
THIS BRANCH AND
TRY TO GET OUT
OF HERE!

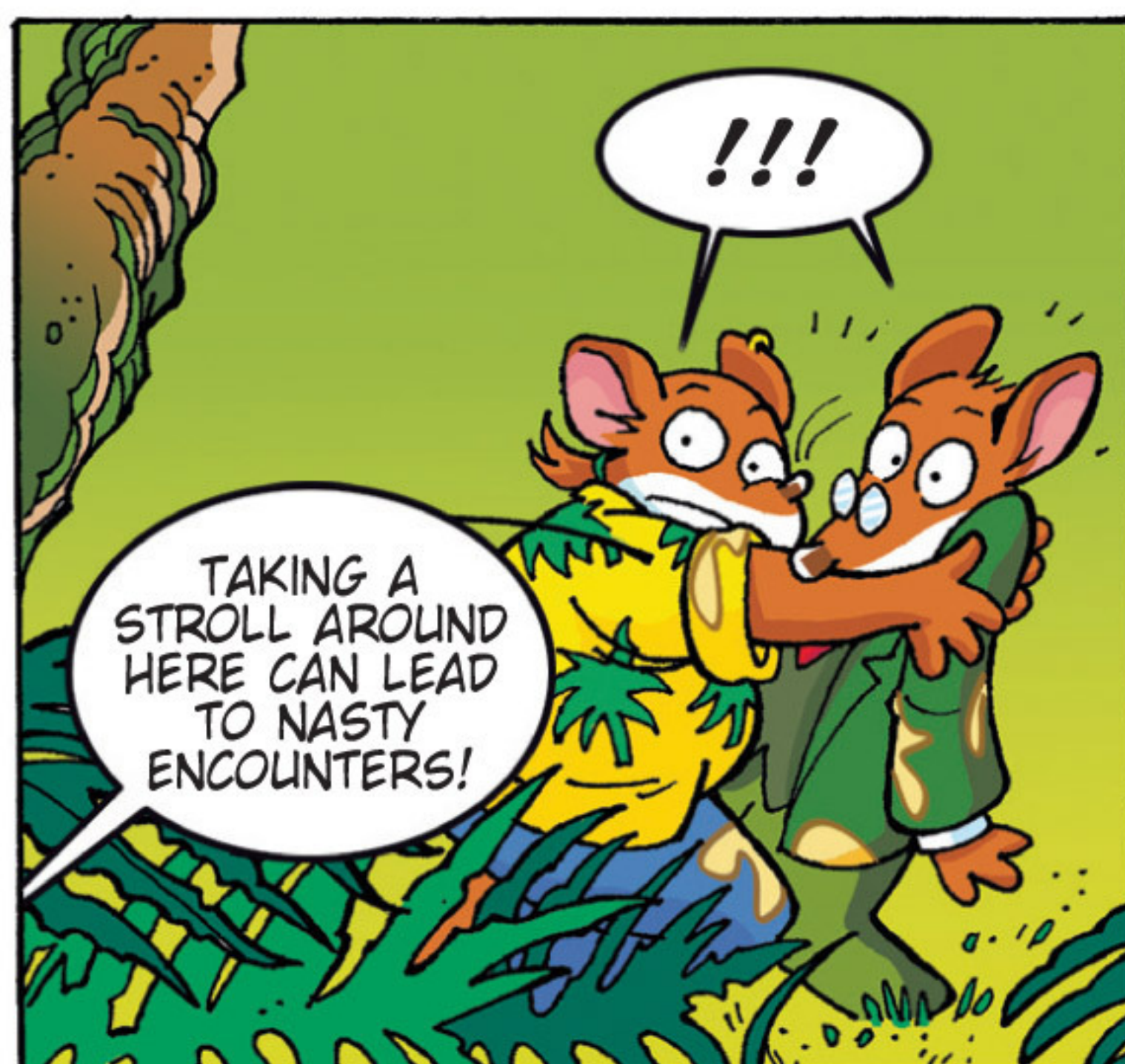
BRANCH? ODD,
I DIDN'T SEE
THAT BEFORE!



DID YOU SAY
SOMETHING,
GERONIMO?

UM, NO! I
THOUGHT THAT
WAS YOUR
STOMACH!





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